

OF
JOHN W. STORRS.



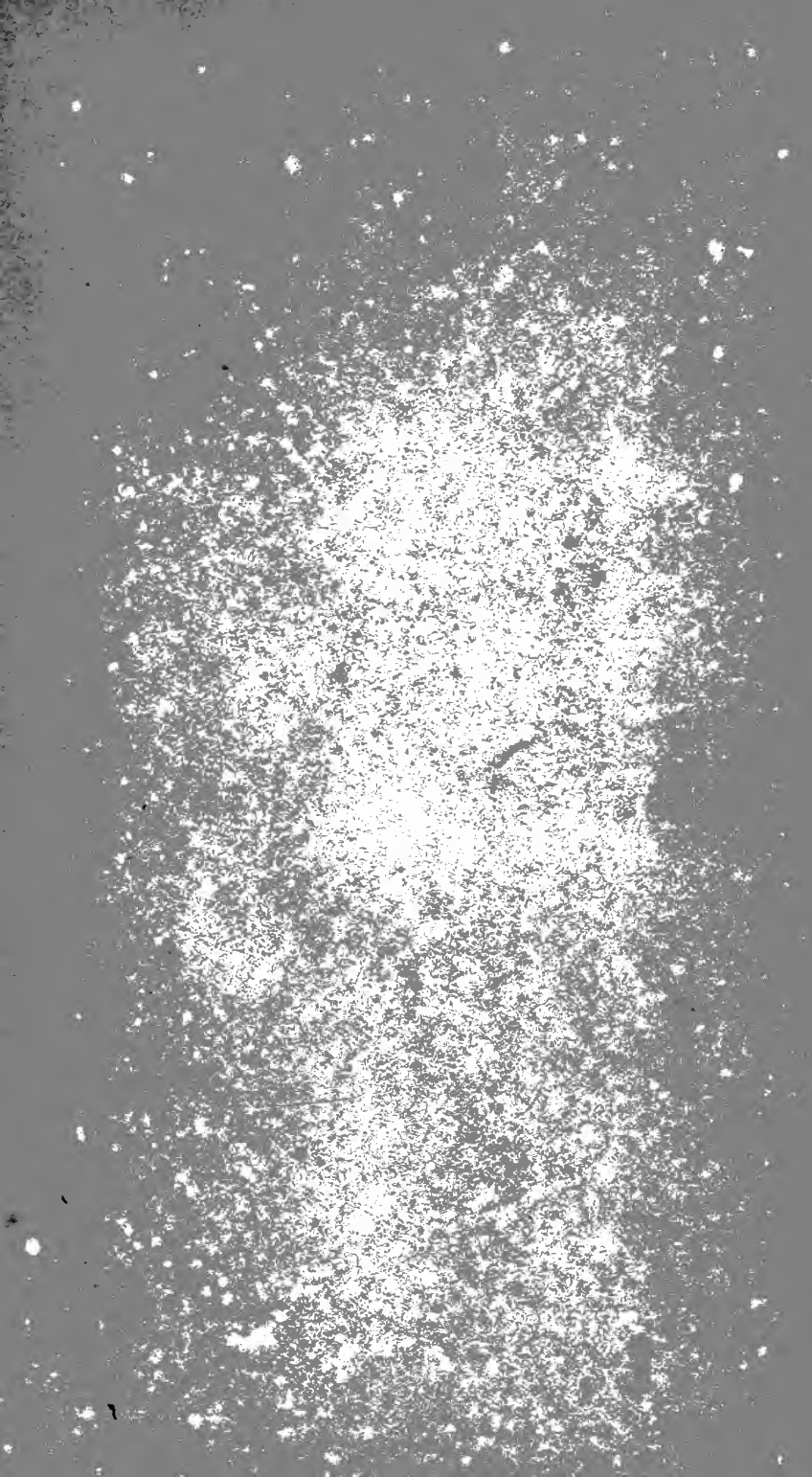
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1850



John W. Storms

POEMS

OF

JOHN WHITING STORRS,

//

WITH MEMOIR.

ANSONIA, CONN.:
PRESS OF "THE EVENING SENTINEL."
1887.

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TO
THE MEMORY
OF
JOHN WHITING STORRS,
WHOSE LIFE WAS PURE, WHOSE AIMS WERE HIGH,
WHOSE PURPOSES WERE NOBLE ;
WHO SANG SO SWEETLY
OF FAITH IN GOD, OF HOPE IN IMMORTALITY,
OF LOVE TO ALL MANKIND,
THIS BOOK
IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED
BY
HIS LOVING WIFE.

M191900

MY EPITAPH.*

What shall you say of me? This if you can,
That he loved like a child, and lived like a man;
That, with head that was bended, he reverent stood
In the presence of all that he knew to be good;
That he strove as he might with pen and with tongue,
To cherish the right, and to banish the wrong;
That the world was to him as he went on his way,
As the bud to the flower; as the dawn to the day
That he knew was to come. E'en, say if you can,
That he labored and prayed for the crowning of man
As king of himself; that the God that he knew
Was the God of the many as well as the few—
The Father of all. Write, then, if you must,
Of the errors that came with the clay and the dust;
But add—as you may, perhaps—to the verse,
For his having lived in it, the world is no worse.

*The above beautiful lines were the result of an inquiry by the late Dr. Beardsley while preparing his History of Derby. Turning to Mr. Storrs, one day, while writing, he said: "Well, John, what shall I say of you?" Without making reply, Mr. Storrs turned to a desk and wrote out his "epitaph," as above. It was an impromptu effort and so pleased the doctor that he incorporated it in his history.

PREFACE.

This book is not for the critic, or for those who have attained perfection in the methods of thought and expression. It is an attempt to preserve to the world thoughts and utterances that were honest-hearted efforts to lead men to higher and better living; to teach faith in God and charity to fellow-men. Mr. Storrs was always diffident of his poetical abilities, and modest in his estimate of the value of his writings, and until a recent period was averse to any attempt to put them in book form. Strongly urged by his friends, especially among the Veteran Free Masons, to do so, he finally yielded to their solicitations and at the annual meeting in Bridgeport, in 1886, he promised to undertake the work, which was begun soon afterwards. Ill health and pressing newspaper duties prevented rapid progress with the preparation of the manuscripts, and but little was accomplished by him, though at the annual meeting, at New Britain, in June last, he announced that he expected to get the poems into print by the end of this year. In a few weeks thereafter he sickened and died.

From the condition in which the manuscripts were found it is evident that Mr. Storrs had intended to revise them somewhat, but in just what line or direction cannot be known. Feeling personally anxious that the work should be completed, and being urged thereto by his Masonic and personal friends, I have attempted the work of compiling and arranging the poems for publication, not because I was the one best fitted for it, but because, knowing him intimately, and having been bound to him by family and fraternal ties for more than a third of a century, I better know the man and the spirit that prompted and permeated all his writings. Doubtful of my abilities in such a line, I have attempted a task which I would not have done but for the kindly assistance of Mr. J. M. Emerson, of "The Ansonia Sentinel," with whom Mr. Storrs had been associated on the editorial staff.

Had Mr. Storrs lived to complete the work he would doubtless have modified many of his poems, for some of them, as I well know, were hurriedly written for special occasions, without time for revision. I have preferred to print them just as I found them, correcting only manifest typographical errors, and preserving the strong individuality with which they are stamped.

What Mr. Storrs wrote was from the promptings of a warmly generous heart. Only a few months since he said to me: "In all that I have written it has been my aim never to lead man to think more meanly of his fellow-man, or to lessen to any degree his faith in God. My aim has been to edu-

cate, to elevate and to ennoble humanity." I am certain that he spoke the truth; and because I was in full sympathy with him in all his aims and purposes, I am anxious that thoughts which he expressed so sweetly and tenderly should be preserved.

May those who love the things that are good and true; who toil in faith, and hope, and love, to lead their fellow-men to a higher and better plane of existence, gain fresh strength and courage from the inspiring words of one who "looked through Nature up to Nature's God," and of whom I can truly say:—

"For his having lived in it the world is no worse."

WM. WALLACE LEE.

MERIDEN, CONN., Oct., 1887.

MEMOIR.

JOHN WHITING STORRS was born in the Connecticut rural town of Woodbridge, February 9th, 1824. His father was John Roger Storrs, and his mother Sarah G. Clark, a granddaughter of Rev. Mr. Woodbridge, the original pastor of the town. He was of the sixth generation from Samuel Storrs, one of the earliest proprietors of Mansfield, Conn. From Woodbridge his parents removed to Oxford, where most of his boyhood days were spent. Thence they came to Seymour (then Humphreysville) and there he grew to manhood. The educational facilities of the time were of themselves quite limited, but Mr. Storrs was unable to avail himself of even such as they were. When he reached his majority he possessed only the simplest rudiments of an education, his father being more desirous that the son should make a good shoemaker than that he should drink of the draughts of knowledge. The trade was distasteful to him, was prosecuted very reluctantly, and abandoned at the earliest opportunity. Mental pursuits were far more congenial. It is related of him that as a boy he was very fond of drawing, and many were the pictures of houses, barns, trees and other objects that he traced in graceful outline with charcoal upon rude pieces of board. The poetic capabilities of his mind also began to manifest themselves early. In 1849 he wrote a short poem that attracted considerable attention in his neighborhood, which poem was credited to his mother, then an invalid. Some creditable specimens of painting also appeared from his hand about this time, but he did not undertake to develop his powers in this direction to any great extent.

In 1849 he was appointed postmaster of Humphreysville, under President Taylor, surrendering the office in 1853 when President Pierce came in. Soon afterwards he started the "Seymour Independent," a paper which, as its name indicates, was professedly independent, but with Whig tendencies. This was the first effort to establish a newspaper in Seymour. It was an earnest and sincere effort, but was abandoned after two or three years, for want of patronage. It sufficed, however, to quicken the desire and confirm the taste for newspaper work, and from that time to his death Mr. Storrs was connected with the press in the capacity of correspondent, reporter or editor. His latest connection was with "The Ansonia Sentinel," having full charge of its Birmingham department, over which he presided for almost six years with much credit to himself and great acceptability to the public. Prior to this, about 1858, he had taken editorial charge of "The Derby Journal," a

Birmingham paper that was in a moribund condition when he came to it, and which neither business tact nor literary ability could rescue from the natural decease that awaited it. After this effort, he engaged in the photograph business, proving himself a very good artist, but was unable to prosecute the trade for any long period of time owing to ill health.

Mr. Storrs was quite prominent among the Masonic fraternity of his state, and by some has been characterized as the poet of the order. At many of the annual reunions of the Veteran Masons during the past ten or twelve years he has been present and has read poems on each occasion. These are all included in the present volume, with some others. He became a Mason in 1852, being initiated into Morning Star lodge, of Seymour. He afterwards affiliated with King Hiram lodge, of Birmingham. He was also a member of Solomon chapter, R. A. M. He never held any offices in the order, having no taste for ritualistic lore and the technicalities of law. But the principles of brotherhood always commanded his willing service at any time. Hence he was very often called on for poems at reunions and society gatherings, and his productions were always received with hearty demonstrations of approval. Mr Storrs was also warmly attached to the veterans of our late civil war, and by his patriotic verses and personal efforts in behalf of the survivors of the struggle, so enshrined himself in their affections that he was regarded as one of their number. Several of the poems read by him at celebrations of the veterans are also included in the collection.

The death of Mr. Storrs occurred on Sunday, August 28th, 1887. He was in his sixty-fourth year.

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MASONIC.

INVOCATION.

O H Masonry Sublime ! beloved of all that know
The matchless beauty of thy sov'reign charms:
Through all their years of journeyings below,
Thy sons have sheltered in thy loving arms ;
Still hold and keep them firmly by the hand,
Till ends their journey to the better land.

As by the chisel and the mallet's blow,
The fairest forms in beauteous marble live :
So, from our hearts may evermore outflow
Those comely graces it is thine to give :—
That finds a flower on every thorny rod,
And leadeth on to manhood and to God.

Broad o'er the earth let thy proud arches span ;
High as to heaven, thy shining turrets rise !
Stretch forth thy hand and lift poor fallen man
From error's ways, and teach him to be wise ;
So shall the world in thee, above the night,
Hail the glad dawn of Universal Light.

.

TO THE VETERAN CRAFT.

READ AT THE SECOND ANNUAL MEETING OF THE VETERAN ASSOCIATION
IN BIRMINGHAM, JUNE, 1872.

YE reverend sires ! once more our feet
Upon one common LEVEL meet,
Where, knee to knee and breast to breast,
We whisper welcome to each guest
Whose honored locks have, by the way
Of past decades, grown ripe and gray ;
And who, by dint of honest toil,
Have quite deserved life's WINE AND OIL.

Thrice honored sires ! save only where
Some silvery head lifts here and there
Above the wreck—like lands of light
Uprising through some shadowy night—
The busy world that was your own,
Has passed away, and ye, alone,
Of all your craft, are left to tell
How much ye builded, and how well ;
How, when attacked by Church and State,—
When RUFFIANS stood at every gate,
With trait'rous heart and venom'd tongue,
Dissent to show your craft among ;
When truth seemed crushed and error grew,
O'ershadowing all the good and true ;
When craven lips, like Peter's, cried,
" I know ye not," still on the side
Where foes were rife and friends were few,
Ye fought the fight, and gained it, too.

Unquestioned now through all the land
Extends the ARCH that HIRAM planned ;
Embracing 'neath its glorious span
The whole broad brotherhood of man.
And we, your sons, are here, to-day,

Beneath its sheltering dome to lay
Upon his brow the grateful wreath,
Who fought our fight, and kept our faith.

Amid the darkness of that night,
Your cry went up to God for LIGHT.
He heard your prayer, and gave you strength,
And years to see the dawn, at length,
Whose glowing light illumines our way
With promise of still brighter day,
When wars shall cease, and Love shall bind
With strengthened bonds all human kind ;
Which opening wide the gates of bliss,
Makes future life the goal of this.

I know not what in store may be
For you, my brother, or for me ;
But this I know—since God is just—
If in His strength we put our trust,
Through journeys long, or good, or ill,
His strong arm will lead us still.
And when we part—as part we must—
Somewhere to meet again, I trust,
May that calm strength, that earnest arm,
That rugged faith which kept aflame
Our altar fires through ill and good,
Descend to bless our brotherhood.

There comes a time—it comes to all—
When we shall hear the Warden's call,
And each, with ASHLER ROUGH or true,
Must pass Death's solemn portal through.
Be it yours, my brother, then to hear
From th' Master's lips these words of cheer,
“Your work is found both true and square,
Pass on !”

FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT.

READ AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE VETERANS IN NEW HAVEN, 1874.

Venerable Brothers :

TWELVE months have passed since last we met
Upon this ancient LEVEL,
When, "looking east, we gave the sign,
And heard the parting 'gavel.'"
The kindly benison was said,
Each brother, loving hearted,
With each exchanged the friendly "grip,"
And "on the square" we parted.
Who, then, the future could forecast?
What prophet tell us whether
Or not, at our next "gavel" call,
We all should meet together?
Yet, though behind each "Temple gate"
Some "ruffian" foe was hidden,
By dint of strength we "pass" at length,
And come, to-day, as bidden,
To drink with you the "oil and wine"
From mystic fount supernal,
Beneath the broad, protecting "Arch"
Of Masonry fraternal.
"Sojourners" here but for a time,
Life's morning pack we gird on,
Yet, ere, perhaps, the evening sun,
We drop the precious burden.
The longest life is short at best,
And even though we should win
What men call "length of years," at last,
(Like Brothers Wells and Goodwin),
We fill (I trust with honest "work,")
Our bark and o'er the river,
With hope and "trustful heart," pass on
From mortal sight forever.

Lo ! as I look along this line
Of craftsmen gray and hoary,
I seek for one familiar form—
One manly “crown of glory.”
You point me to one vacant chair—
The name of WIRE is spoken ;
You tell his virtues, but alas !
I find his “column ” broken.
’Twas builded well. Full eighty years
His honest blows resounded
From “base ” to “cap,” till “ashler rough ”
Was sweetly smoothed and rounded.
’Twas built upon such solid base
Of brotherhood and duty,
That even Time’s despoiling hand
Could scarcely mar its beauty.
And though to dust its dust returns,
The builder’s inward spirit
Of love for God and fellow-man
As Masons we inherit.

O craftsmen, what a world were this,
If men would work together,
Like brothers true, life’s journey through,
In dark or sunny weather;
There’s scarce an ill to us bequeathed
By Eve, our erring mother,
But might be cured, or well endured,
If men would love each other.
Our Father, God; our mother, earth;
Are we not brethren fairly ?
Why then should we not all “agree,
In peace and love and unity,”
To treat each other squarely ?
Ought men to act like wolves in pack,
That eat each lame relation,
Nor spare a friend if selfish end
Demands his immolation ?

Can we afford to draw the sword
 At every slight offending,
 While o'er our head,—perhaps by a thread—
 Are sharper ones suspending ?
 I tell you nay ! the gentler way
 Is best with those that grieve us :
 For when we pray, do we not say,
 “ As we forgive, forgive us ? ”
 O craftsmen, then, let us as men
 And brethren dwell together ;
 For aye to stand, with heart in hand,
 In friendship by each other.

The day for bigotry and hate
 Is past and out of season :
 No partial God holds out the rod
 In this the day of reason !
 No petty tyrant as of old,
 With creed and dogma crammed, sir,
 Shouts, swim my brook and bite my hook,
 Or I will see you damned, sir.
 Or, if he “ shout,” some worldly lout,
 More sharp than reverential,
 With grinning mask, is apt to ask,
 To see the chap's credential.
 The ruling theme to-day is love,
 In sermon and in story ;
 And few will tell of infant's hell,
 Where God once wrought his “ glory.”
 In fact, this thought is gaining ground,
 (For which we're much the debtor,)
 By Gods or men, by tongue or pen,
 The less we're damned the better.
 “ Man Friday's ” question, “ why don't God
 Wipe out this fiend of evil ? ”
 Is answered, since good common sense
 At last HAS “ killed the devil.”

Yet, brother mine, though law divine
Is love not retribution,
Still this is true, who fails to sow
Will reap but destitution.
Who sows the wind and reaps the storm
Gets all that's due him fairly ;
Who sows the sun at heart is warm,
And walks in darkness rarely.
Some one may say, now if I pray
And go to church on Sunday,
I've filled the plot, no matter what
I choose to do on Monday !
Be not deceived ! With Masons true
Each week has Sundays seven ;
And every one, from sun to sun,
To righteous "work" is given.

Be not deceived ! 'tis th' conscience men
Who "work" for seven-day wages ;
That build our ARCH and lead the march
Of progress through the ages.
'Tis not enough that men should meet
In seventh day convention,
And mumble creeds, content that deeds
Should have the merest mention.
'Tis not enough that men should mouth
Their prayers of showy sounding,
While at their door God's needy poor,
Unaided, are abounding.
The tree whose mission 'tis to bear
But flowers, has done its duty,
When its perfume is on the air,
And men have seen its beauty.
But where we have a right to look
For FRUIT of fair dimensions,
Why be content with the simple scent
Of flowery-made pretensions ?

God asks for "figs !" and if the tree
In barrenness still slumbers;
He cuts it down and plants his own
Upon the ground it cumpers.
God asks for WORK ! Then, as he gives
Us strength, so let us use it,
That EVERY day its part shall bear
In yielding "work," so "true and square,"
That he will not refuse it.

Here I might pause ; and yet, perhaps, 'twere fitting,
That should be spoken words of kindly cheer
To these our fathers, as a special greeting,
On this reunion of another year.

To these, our fathers, that in day of trial,
Stood by our craft when weaker spirits quailed,
Chiseling—in darkness, faith and self-denial—
Stones for the altar the future was to build.

Meeting on the hill-top—toiling in the valley—
Watching for the cowan ever on their trail ;
Only this to guide them—only this to rally,
Brotherhood and duty to "God within the veil."

Well, "how goes the hour" with you, O aged warder ?
With you whose head so whitens in the sun ?
With you whose feet tread close upon the border,
Where "labor" has an end, and refreshment is begun ?

How goes the hour, through valleys dark and lowly ?
More thorns than flowers, more bitter fruit than sweet ?
"Look to the east !" the morning breaketh slowly,
With rest and refreshment for your weary feet.

Only a little way, and then the road winds sweetly
Down sloping woodlands to the setting sun,
Only a little while, and struggling hope completely
Shall find fruition for life's "labor" done.

Only a little way, and the realms supernal,
Through opening vistas break upon the sight ;
Only a little while, and in the "Lodge" eternal,
Shall all be "raised" from darkness into LIGHT.

JUNE SNOW.

READ AT THE ANNUAL REUNION OF THE VETERANS AT WATERBURY,
JUNE 26, 1878.

"A hoary head is a crown of glory."
"I have fought the fight—I have kept the faith."

I.

IN this leafy month of June,
With the forests all attune,
And the buttercup and daisy
Everywhere upon the ground;
Tell me, craftsmen, if you know,
Why hath come this line of snow,
Here within this mystic Temple,
To encircle us around?

Surely, there is place and time,
For the snow, and for the rime,—
Where the buttercup is sleeping,
While the daisies are away;
But the thing is not so clear,
In this summer of the year,
Why it sifteth in upon us
At our gathering of to-day.

Yet some lesson, we may know,
Lieth underneath the snow—
As, sometimes, a smile is hidden
Underneath a seeming frown;

So these snowy flakes so white,
Come to symbolize the light,
And to teach that nearest Heaven
Shines the fairest, whitest crown.

Just as in some mountain land,
While the traveler may stand,
Gazing upward toward the summit
Of some snow-capped mountain high,
In its majesty erect,
He may truthfully reflect,
That it gains its chiefest glory
From its nearness to the sky.

Aged brother, well I know,
That the frost upon thy brow,
But reflects the ray supernal
That is streaming from on high.
And as farther on you climb,
Toward the pinnacles of time,
Every step, some brighter glory
Shall be gathered from the sky.

Limbs may totter as you go,
Furrows deeper line the brow,
Slower beat life's waning pulses,
Through each blue and shriveled vein;
But the soul, forever young,
With a firmer step and strong,
Shall impatient onward hasten,
Till it reach the shining plain.

II.

Through the twilight, dim and gray,
Upward to this brighter day,
Ye have brought the "perfect ashlers"
Which were hewn upon the way;
True and Square, without a trace

Of 'prentice hand upon their face—
 "Just the work are they that's wanted
 For the Temple" of to-day.

On each polished block we trace
 Lines which time cannot efface—
 Pictured lines of ancient battle,
 With the Cowans of the wrong;
 And we read with quickened sight,
 How ye struggled for the right,
 Till the foe at last was vanquished,
 And the weak became the strong.

Ah, the lesson that is taught
 In the story thus inwrought,
 As we build our earthly Temple,
 To our profit we may scan;
 Learning, so our block to place,
 As to give it strength and grace,
 And to lay our strong foundations
 Deep within the inner man.

III.

Craftsmen, with your Spade and Bar,
 Ye have traveled long and far;
 Tell me, if amid your travels
 Ye have found the Sacred Word?
 Out of darkness into day,
 As ye fought your sturdy way,
 Deep within life's inner Temple,
 Was the voice of Wisdom heard?
 E'er had come these winter days,
 With their cool and slanting rays,
 Didst thou heed the great commandment,
 "Love thy God and neighbor, too"?
 Aye, methinks I hear you say,
 This we learned along the way,
 And by the Word of Wisdom guided
 We have strove to live it true.

Then, my brother, it is well;
Joys for you no tongue can tell,
As ye stand erect and trustful,
 Waiting for the homeward gale,
Where the wavelets kiss the shore
Of the sea called "Evermore,"
Just around Death's jutting headland
 Waits for you a silver sail.

Tolls the bell! and helm in hand,
Turns the boatman from the land;
Craftsmen, in that homeward passage,
 Who shall be the first to share?
Swift the nimble moments fly!
Craftsman, is it you, or I,
That within this mystic circle,
 First shall leave a vacant chair?

Tolls the bell! and muffled feet
Tread the city's busy street,
With our Three Great Lights in keeping,
 Borne by one of silver hair.
Tolls the bell! and swings the gate
Open to our last estate,
And again a Column Broken
 Stands beside a vacant chair.

Other years shall come and go,
Leaving only tracks of snow;
Yet shall ply that surly boatman
 Daily to the silent shore.
Plumb and Gavel, Robe and Crown,
One by one, we lay them down,
Pass beyond earth's line of vision,
 And are seen of men no more.

Well, what matter, so we land,
Safe upon some better strand?

More or less of time is nothing,
 If Hope's breezes fill our sail.
 Poor and naked, weak and blind,
 Gladly leaving earth behind,
 Like a homeward child returning—
 Let us pass within the vail.



MASONRY—ITS MEANING AND MISSION.



READ AT THE ANNUAL REUNION OF THE VETERANS AT NEW HAVEN, 1879.

IF you tell me speech is silver, and that silence it is golden,
 I shall grant you, yet shall give you but the silver in my
 rhymes;
 For though counted but as nothing in the Temple days and
 olden,
 Yet we make it "legal tender," in these democratic times.

Brothers, look you to the eastward! far above the azure
 mountains,
 Lo! the Genius of our Order sets her bow upon the sky.
 From beneath its shining archway spring those everliving
 fountains
 That have brightened all our valleys with the progress of
 to-day.

Outward from the glowing center, Justice sends the sweet
 libation
 Of her even-tempered waters on their purifying way;
 While the blended streams of Commerce, Science, Art and
 Education,
 Bring the offerings of the Nations for our Temple of
 to-day.

See! along the darkened ages,—see the footsteps of our
Martyrs;

How they cut their shining pathways through the jungle
of the wrong;

Though for sordid thirty pieces, here and there a Judas
barters,

And the Nazarene is slaughtered, yet the builders move
along.

For 'tis not by Sign or Signet that the temple wall uprises;

These are but the crude expression of a thought that lies
within;—

E'en without them, Men are Masons, if that thought but
crystalizes

Into lives of loving labor for the brotherhood of men.

Names are nothing, forms are nothing; 'tis the Spirit that
controlleth;

And the Spirit of our Order is that Love that evermore
Hath been living—shall be working, till within its ranks
enrolleth

All the world to own its beauty and its majesty adore.

Oh, this Masonry of loving! what a world were this, my
brother,

If the walls of separation could but once be broken down!
So the tender arms of kindness might be cast around each
other,

And the demons of our nature be forever overthrown.

Oh, the Masonry of labor! laying broad and deep foundations
For that mighty superstructure of some far millennial
time;

Underneath whose Royal Arches shall be gathered all the
Nations,

In one Grand Lodge demonstration of the work of the
Sublime.

Oh, the Masonry of Nations! glorious end of all our labor!
Every thought and deed unselfish brings it farther on the
way!
For, no word can e'er be uttered for our God, or for our
neighbor,
That shall hang not all its fruitage on our Universal Tree.

But, a saddened thought comes o'er me as these well remembered
faces
Range themselves about our Altar, to revive the sacred
flame.
Here and there I see before me empty chairs and vacant
places,—
Yet not vacant quite, my brothers, for each bears a
cherished name.

Whisper us, oh risen ATWELL,—if but lawful for revealing,—
Tell us what may be *our* chances, when the shining portals
swing,
As the glories of the morning through the shadows are
unveiling,
And we stand beneath the Arches of the Temple of the
King.

Yet we walk amid the darkness of our nature, blindly groping,
With our either hand outstretching for some doorway to
the Light,
And we turn the roughened Ashlers in the Rubbish, fondly
hoping,
To find amid their number the Key Stone of the right.

Yet we have the bright example of one life that was among us,
That will guide us, if we follow, to the open gates
above—
If we heed his steady counsel to forgive the wrongs that
wrong us,
And to win men into friendship by our Charity and Love.

Then, Companions, with our Trowels, let us Labor on
together,

Spreading evermore the mortar of our kindness as we go;
So that when the Gavel falleth, we shall hear the loving
Father

Calling upward to refreshment from our Labor here below.

TO THE CRAFT.

READ AT ANNUAL REUNION OF THE VETERANS AT WILLIMANTIC, 1880.

I.

UNKNOWING whither did my footsteps tend,
I came a stranger to an unknown shore:

Behind me all was darkness, and before
Grim shadows deepened on every hand;
Alone and helpless, yet not friendless, quite,
Else had my vessel foundered in the night.

A thousand wrecks were strewn upon the tide:
The billows rolled and raging tempests howled:—
Weary my hand, th' unruly helm to hold,
Yet safe to harbor did my vessel glide.
With timorous feet, I stepped upon the shore
And, hopeful, entered at life's open door.

I looked, and lo! far up the mountain side,
Hope's golden temple with its turrets gleamed
All fair and bright, as e'er a poet dreamed;
With lofty pillars and with portals wide,
Tow'ring aloft, above the craggy height,
Mine eyes were dazzled with the crowning light.

With hast'ning speed I sped the path along,—
Eager, at once, so fair a goal to reach:
Myriad flowers made glad mine eyes, as each

Awoke within the melody of song.

Yet, as I climbed still farther up the steep,
My castle vanished in the shadows deep.

The Sun went out. The moon and stars were dead,
Above me hung a lowering cloud of grey,
Foul, hissing demons crouching in my way,
Their venomed shafts into my bosom sped,
Still, pressing on by faith into the night,
With upward eye, I sought the morning light.

II.

One day, I entered at an ancient door,
Just as the shadows of the evening came:
I stopped and wrote upon the dusty floor,
With year and day, the record of my name,
As one that long had traveled in the night,
From land to land, and hung'ring for the light.

Beside me stood a venerable form,
Whose head was hoary with the frost of years:
His hand was gentle, as his heart was warm,
And sweet the words he gave unto mine ears.
"Courage, my child! above the clouds of night,
The stars are shining, and the skies are bright."

But I am naked, penniless and blind,
Weary with labor, tremblingly said I:
Tell me, my father, howso shall I find,
The long sought path up-leading to the sky?
Lo! where I turn fierce brambles pierce my feet,—
On every step, some evil doth await!

"Child, take this staff," he said, "and follow me:"
(The staff he gave me was the Word of Light.)
"Put on the sandals of its truth," said he,
"And fearless set thy feet into the night!
Hope for thy watch-word,—manhood for thy goal,—
Keep well in view the temple of the soul."

I took the book, and on its pages sweet,
 I read the words, "to them that overcome,
 Of hidden manna will I give to eat,
 And a new name." Then from the shrouding gloom
 Mine earth-bound eyes I lifted to the height,
 And lo! the Temple of Masonic Light
 Shone as the Sun! Upon its columns rare
 Was written Wisdom, Beauty, Strength and Grace;
 Lined by the Plumb, and builded by the Square,
 The Master's hand was plain upon its face;
 I looked, and lo! to Wisdom's fair estate
 Was opened wide its free, inviting gate.

III.

Within the porch, at length my pilgrim feet,
 Travelled and sore, were privileged to stand:
 Yet farther on, and I may hope to meet,
 Through faithful toil, the bounty of His hand,
 Who said of old, "My grace I freely give,
 Yet, as thy work, so, child, must thou receive."
 With this in view, my feet still travel on
 The line of duty, wheresoe'er it tend:—
 From op'ning morn, to evening's setting sun,
 Each shining hour, the brightest at the end.
 Whate'er my sheaves—the many or the few,—
 Thankful I take the wages that are due.

IV.

O brother mine! what matter though the gray,
 Like snowy flakelets creep into the hair?
 What though our feet may falter on the way?
 There's neither snow, or halting "over there,"
 Whither we go—the proudest, as the least,—
 To take our stations in the shining East.
 So let us live, that when at last shall break
 Upon our ears, the Master's final call;

And in the orient morning we awake,
 No record there shall meet us to appal—
 No lengthened shadow to oppress our way,
 Or mar the op'ning of that brighter day.
 And thou, my brother, that with eager feet,
 Hast entered hopeful on life's 'prentice track,
 Strive so to run, that with the ending "heat,"
 No mark of honor shall the record lack.
 Keep well within the circumscribed design
 Of Love and Friendship, turning never back;
 The outer circle hath the longest line;—
 Truth at the center—take the inner track!
 So as ye pass the threshold of the gate,
 The judge's plaudit shall thy coming greet.

V.

Who knoweth the time of the coming
 Of the day that shall close the account?
 When the wheel shall be stilled at the cistern
 And the pitcher broke at the fount?
 Come forth with your rods of divining,
 Oh men that in Magic are great,
 And read me the mystical signet,
 That gleams on the finger of fate!
 A twelvemonth of planting and sowing,
 (What matter if less, or if more?)
 Of fretting, and toiling and scheming,
 To keep the gaunt wolf from the door.
 And here we have gathered together,
 To round out the cycle again,
 With tears for the loved and departed,
 And cheers for the friends that remain.
 The tide floweth outward and onward,—
 A moment, and we shall be gone:
 High up on the shore, there to crumble,
 Like a skull and a whitening bone!

“Who was he?” Oh, say you “a dreamer
That dreamed until weary of breath;”
Yet, remember, oh child of the Ages,
That he saw in the glass of his fath.—

Near, or far—’neath the centuries’ arches,
The feet of the workmen that bring,
With the Rod, and the Word, and the Signet,
The Ark to the Priest, and the King;—
Where the Light upon Masonry’s altars
The “Word” hath forever unsealed,
And the Christ, at the base of our manhood,
To the world is in fullness revealed.

VI.

Nay, friend, but the flame of our altar,
I would not unduly exalt;
The hearts that surround it are human,
And the human hath many a fault.
We claim not the grace of perfection:
Who claimeth this under the skies,
On his head hath the caul of a bigot,
And the Light hath not entered his eyes.

We ask not the credit of Wisdom,
Save for that which the reason approves;
Our faith is that faith of the ages,
Which runs in humanity’s grooves.
Our God is the God of the humble,
That evermore under the sun,
Regardeth no man as the better,
Save for work he better hath done!

No rival to Church or religion;—
Though bound not by bigotry’s chain,—
We yield to the “Lion of Judah,”
A right in our temple to reign.
And so, as we gather together,
We bow to the good and the true,

And we lay upon Masonry's altar,
 That homage to righteousness due.
 Then, brothers, while waiting the coming
 Of the day that shall close the account;
 When the wheel shall be still at the cistern,
 And the pitcher is broke at the fount,
 Let us climb, hand in hand, up the mountain,
 Undismayed by the shadows or shade,
 Giving each, what from each is expected,
 The staff of our mutual aid.

BROTHERHOOD.

READ AT ANNUAL REUNION OF VETERANS IN BIRMINGHAM, 1881.

I.

IF the world were what it might be; if unto our latter day,
 Came the Christ of human kindness, with no Judas to betray;
 If upon our human shoulders grew perfection's snowy wings,
 Love and truth, and peace and mercy, were inevitable things.

As it is, the wage of battle leadeth every sure advance;
 Peace must follow in the pathway of the sabre and the lance;
 As it is, who overcometh, and the falchion doth swing,
 Single handed, against numbers, is the honored of the king.

Wrong may have a healthy mission, with no ill to overcome;
 Heaven itself, with all its brightness, were but weariness of
 doom;

Never ending song and chorus, even though before the throne,
 Might make even Hades welcome, some respiting afternoon.

But, where'er the struggle cometh, for the right, forevermore
 Virtue, love and truth are stronger from the contest than
 before.

Yet, who fights the hardest battle, may not be for us to know;
 Oft a reed withstands a tempest that hath laid a forest low.

So it is, my worthy brothers—you that came to us in gray—
That we recognize as trophies from your field of yesterday,
Rising grandly through the shadows to the realms of the
unseen,
The forever spanning arches of this brotherhood of men.

Simple though the outward grouping of its legends and its
lore,
Yet their underlying beauty men acknowledge evermore;
Spoken on the highest hill top, or repeated in the glen,
Evermore their kindly teaching is the brotherhood of men.

Once beneath our friendly arches, men have never gone astray
For the lack of chart and compass, or the knowledge of the
way;
Penury cannot dismember; kings are but as peasants, when
They but step within the circle of this brotherhood of men.

Not as builders of this temple, oh, ye veterans of gray,—
Since it had more ancient corners, are ye welcomed here
to-day;
But as saviours and preservers in the darkened moments, when
But the bravest dared to champion this brotherhood of men.

Gladly, then, as such we hail you, and as these, our guarded
doors,
Open for your hearty welcome to our emblematic floors,
Let us cast aside the burden of our travels as we can,
While we pledge anew to friendship and this brotherhood of
man.

II.

“Things that have been,” said Solomon, “are things that shall
be done,”
Forevermore there’s “nothing that is new beneath the sun;”
But if our ancient craftsman revisits human kind,
It may be that the prophet, ere this, has changed his mind

For this day of days the brightest that the world hath ever
seen,

Taketh not a thing for gospel, *because* a thing hath been;
The watchword now is "Onward!" and with each victory won,
It turns again to something that is "new beneath the sun."

Our craft should be progressive, since its mission is to
build,—

It's mortar better tempered, its workmen better skilled,—
So that every day's advancement, with the finished block in
place,

Shall, the structure lifting higher, have some new and added
grace.

I am not so old as many, but I've lived to see and know,
The hand that works so plainly in all things here below;
Jehovah, God, or Allah,—whate'er the spoken name,
In "Wisdom" it is written forevermore the same.

There hath been some strange mutations in this world of
living men;

Cherished idols have been shattered that forevermore had
been

From the soul emancipated; e'en the ancient shackles drop,
As the "jealous God" of Moses cometh down from Sinai's
top,

With the outstretched hand of kindness, and a smile upon his
brow,

To uplead his erring children from their wandering's below.

I have heard the voice of angels, felt the wafting of their
wings,

And have known the consolation that their gentle presence
brings;

E'en death's shrouding veil is parted, and the "traveller
returns"

To dry the tear of sorrow and to comfort who that mourns.

I have seen the arms of genius e'en the earth itself enfold;
Lightning's messenger our pleasure from the New World to the
Old;
Woman's hand emancipated by the "Howe" or "Singer;"
e'en
Our daily bread upgathered by the "sweat" of some machine!
Still the marching word is "Onward!" victories yet are to be
won;
Every day for aye discloses something "new beneath the
sun,"
And it well behoves us, brothers, with the glory all in sight,
Not to bend above our shadows, with our back unto the light

III.

Years ago there came among us, dusty from the traveled way,
Men of gentle, loving presence, who are with us yet to-day;
Here and there an added furrow, here and there a flake of
snow,
Yet the same true-hearted brothers that they were ten years
ago.
Some there were, no longer with us, in the search for "further
light,"
With their honors thick upon them, that have vanished from
the sight;
As, ere long, we too shall vanish, and e'en to be as that have
been,
Yet shall not a chair be vacant in this brotherhood of men.
For, while human strength is weakness, while is darkness on
our track,
While a single burden resteth on a brother's pleading back,
There shall be of worthy craftsmen, as forevermore hath been,
Hearts to cherish, hands to labor for this brotherhood of men.
Peace be with you, aged craftsmen! joy to every honored
guest!

When the shadows round are falling, and the sun is in the
west,
May the ever guiding angel—through the journeyings of yore,
That hath led—still lead and comfort in the journeyings
before.

May the fruitage of your labors bring contentment to the
breast,
And of all life's precious moments, may each last one be the
best,
So that as ye homeward travel, full of hopefulness elate,
Ye may never doubt of welcome at the Temple's inner gate.

Peace to all! and as the evening, with its solemn shadows
crowned,
Is the fresh and dewy morning to a region just beyond,
So, as fall death's veiling shadows, and the waiting portals
swing,
May our evening prove the morning in the kingdom of the
King.



THE RELIGION OF MASONRY.



READ AT THE REUNION OF THE VETERANS IN NEW HAVEN, 1882.

I.

IF "Old Hiram were so minded, what a story could be told
Of the many strange mutations—of the happenings of old
Liberty in deadly struggle, with the tyrant of the seas—
Victory upon her standard, and her flag upon the breeze.

Days that came of plotting treason, when old Hickory Jackson
swore,
He would hang—by the Eternal?—high as Haman hanged of
yore,

Every traitor that—wherever found upon Columbia's shores,—
With impious feet should trample down his country's flag, and
ours.

Later on, that mighty battle for the manhood of a race,
That hath purged that periled banner from the blot of its
disgrace;
That hath lifted it so grandly that the story of its birth,
Is the story of a nation that is proudest of the earth.

It is fitting that these "old men" who yet linger on the stage,
Should come up unto this temple with the staff of "very
age;"

So to get faint indication of the temples that may rise,
When the pilgrimage is ended, in the morning of the skies.

Tell me, venerable Brothers, ye that signed in thirty-two,
That appeal and declaration, tell me truly, then did you,
Ever with forecasting vision, see yourselves with favored feet,
Standing 'neath the noble "arches" of a temple so complete?

In this day of light and freedom we can little comprehend
The courage that was needed these your altars to defend!
Belied and persecuted by the pow'rs of Church and State:
Upon every side the venom, and the mutterings of hate?

Looking outward from the places of their secrecy profound,
From the hill-tops,—from the valleys,—from their chambers
underground;
Of the struggles of its craftsmen, its bright standard to
uphold,—

If old Hiram were so minded, what a story could be told!

E'en there is a loving story—unto glory evermore—
Of the hearts that have been lightened by these workingmen
of yore:
Of the doings of the right hand—by the left hand never
known,
That have gone up as an incense to the One upon the Throne!

Were it not so, could our Order e'er have prospered in the
land?

Men are slow not in perceiving as to what is in the hand
That extendeth for their friendship—or for wordliness, or
greed,—

Or the great unselfish mercy that contributes to their need.

But we must not be exclusive. Lo! a tempest in the sky!

Life is periled in the breakers! “Help, oh, help us!” is the cry,
Through the storm cloud do we answer, “are you of our clan,
or creed?”

Nay; 'tis ours to man the life boat, and go dashing to the
need.

It is ours to keep the life boat ready manned upon the shore,
With an eye upon the breakers, and a hand upon the oar;
For that Charity is heartless that, in this poor world of sin,
Never thinks, but in regalia, of the brotherhood of men.

II.

Men hold up their hands in horror, at some venerable form
That they feel quite sure was moulded in a region that is
warm;

And they shudder and they shiver, as they talk of spirits dire,
That we summon 'round our victims as they broil upon the
fire!

But we'll bear each other witness—“Hiram” and “King
Hiram” too—

That the “spirits” from our councils were abolished long ago;
We will bear each other witness that the “horrid things” we
swear,

Only lead up to the level of a life upon the square:—

E'en that noble square of Friendship, that we know is from
above,

On whose great four sides are written Faith, Hope, Charity
and Love!

Aye, and this I venture for you, that, however you profess,
Or deny some ancient doctrine for a brother in distress.

Down the hand goes to the pocket; up a tear swells to the
eye;

And, until the one is emptied, is the other never dry;
For we make it our religion—yours, my brother, yours and
mine,

So to follow out the precepts of that Masonry divine,

Which doth hold *all* men as brothers, tho' they stand without
the door;

That hath pity for the erring, and a shilling for the poor;
And we never need be doubtful of the fruitage to his share,
Who exemplifies our teachings of the level and the square.

Though the pathway may be rugged that Apprentices must
tread,

'Tis the same—and ever must be—where the Master hath been
led;

For, within our friendly borders, is there never caste or clan;
All that Masonry considers is the Stature of the MAN.

III.

How like coarse untempered mortar is this story of our years!
Sands of hope and disappointment—joy and sorrow; bitter
tears;

E'en these fleshly walls uplifted—how they crumble to decay;
Like the cities of an army that are builded for a day.

Yet, is life less worth the living? Every fleeting moment dies
But to live in something better—something nearer to the skies;
Even where the heavens are bending to some distant horizon,
Endeth but our present vision; Life has something farther on.

True, oft cometh pain and sorrow, with the tolling of the
bell;

But it seems to me, most truly, that it hath been ordered well;
It is but the flesh that quivers when the arrow hath been
thrown—

King of pain and king of sorrow, sits the spirit on the throne.

In the line upon the forehead,—in the silver of the hair;
In the halting of the footsteps, though is warning everywhere,
It is but the call from labor to refreshment; from the East
It is but the three times calling of the Master to the feast.

Why should then our hearts be troubled? With our feet upon
the line;

With the compasses uncovered on the page of the divine!
Casting out all mere pretences—he shall rank as of the good,
Who doth hold this creed, unbroken,—God, and truth, and
brotherhood.

For, of all the world's religions, that in time was e'er begun,
This, the elder, must forever be the true, unchanging one!
Mythologic forms may vanish! altars crumble to decay!
But shall this great love religion, never, never pass away.



TWO VACANT CHAIRS.



READ AT ANNUAL REUNION OF VETERANS AT BRIDGEPORT, JUNE 23, 1886.

WHEN first I sang, in bygone years,
Of silver hairs, to veteran ears,
Not one frost-line among mine own
Had Time's relentless fingers sown.
And yet, to-day, my mirror tells
A tale at which the heart rebels—
A tale of years—of vanished youth;
And yet, despite the larger growth,
I find myself as but a boy
And tickled with the merest toy.
True, months wear out; the seasons pass;
And once a year, Time turns the glass;
Yet, comes with Hope, as to beguile,
The bright new year. And with a smile
Its friendly, handsome face upon,
The greeting gives—"How are you, John?"

I think there's something in the faith
That saith to men, "there is no death."
"Twixt the Without, and the Within,
The veil, to me, grows daily thin.
And yet I know that with each morn
Men go from sight—as men are born;
On crutch or staff at halting pace
Old Age departs, while, in its place
An infant comes with toddling gait
To tread the same great round of fate:
To slumber in some lonely spot,
As it forgets to be forgot.

What, then, is life? The child replies,
"A hundred years beneath the skies!
A time to dance; a time to sing;
A time for joy—perpetual Spring!"

"A hundred years?" retorts the old:
"'Tis but a tale too quickly told!
We gather wealth to lay it down,
With not a crust to call our own.
The very roof, above our head,
Is simply borrowed from the dead.
Each corner lot of village ground
A dozen vanished men have owned;
As other men, when we are cold,
Will by the same frail tenure hold.
The Spring-time hath a treacherous glow,
That endeth with perpetual snow;
For every flower some nipping frost;
For every hope, some treasure lost."

So thought, perhaps, one that, to-day,
Is missing from our line of gray;—
One, for himself, that could not see
Behind the clouds of mystery,—
And back of things of time, and sense—
God's waiting crown of recompense.

E'en that could not, he thought, receive
As truth, what others might believe,
On claimed revealments from the sky—
While living they, as 'twere a lie.

Perhaps he ought; yet, after all,
What Whipple thought was matter small,
Compared with—that he hewed the rock
Giv'n to his hand, so that the block,
Carved from its depths, at least, did bear,
The Master's verdict, "True and square."
Though holding not to others' creeds,
He wrote his own in generous deeds.
With sturdy grip upon the right,
No power of men could him affright,
Or move him from—as understood—
The strictest path of rectitude.

These were his virtues. Ills to find
I leave to him that hath not sinned.

Another saith, "On looking back
I only see a flowery track.
True, thorns have been, yet from my way,
By patient hand were swept away,
Or, at the least, wherever grown,
By vigorous feet were trodden down.
At night I close my lattice bars
And live, in dreams, beyond the stars.
With morning light, I lift mine eyes
And worship 'neath the arching skies.

Where'er I go, some hopeful word
About the "farther on" is heard
From myriad lips, bespeaking love,
And life in some Grand Lodge above.
"Life! loving life, a rosy ray!"
So sang the bard and passed away
From home, and lodge, and sight of men,
Our craftsman true—dear "Brother Glen."

From manhood's prime, to nigh four-score,
 He trod, upright, our chequered floor;
 E'er gave his hand to cheerful toil,
 Content with what of corn and oil
 Fell to his share. Loving and loved,
 In every sphere his presence proved
 A gladsome ray,
 That brightened till it passed away.

"Glendining's dead!" one bard hath sung;
 Another holds the saying wrong,
 If to our friend
 It so was meant that came the end.
 'Twere better said
 That such as he are never dead.
 They live in word, and work, and deed—

Exemplars, bright, for other's heed.
 Nay, more than this; beyond the veil,
 Responding to their worthy hail,
 The gates swing wide. And 'neath the arch
 Of Heav'n's expansive skies, the march
 Of such go on from height to height,
 In search of light—God's wond'rous Light.

* * * * * *

We look the chapel window through
 To find the landscape cold and blue.
 We raise the sash, and quick is seen
 The landscape bright with gold and green.
 Like croakers in some dismal oak,
 No time have we to sit and croak,
 Of things that die, while on the air,
 Life, throbbing life, is everywhere.

With us the sash is up, good friends;
 No weird blue glass its falsehood lends
 To mar our pleasure, or destroy
 The sunshine of our social joy.

The sash is up! And friendship's ray
 Comes stealing softly in, to-day,
 To fill the soul, while forth extends
 The greeting hand 'twixt loving friends,
 Who, as they part, say not "farewell,"
 That saddest word that tongue can tell;
 But who, and simply, at the door,
 Repeat the sweeter AU REVOIR,
 Which saith, to soothe the parting pain,
 "Good-bye, until we meet again."

YOU AND I.

READ AT THE REUNION OF THE VETERANS AT NEW BRITAIN, 1887.

DOWN the rapid river drifting,
 Day by day,
 Scenes are changing, sands are shifting,
 Every day.
 Now and then some treasure missing:—
 Lips refuse the proffered kissing,
 Yet, withal, there comes a blessing,
 Every day.
 He of our great pity needeth,
 Underneath,
 Every line of life that readeth
 But of death;
 On discouraged oar reclining:
 Coming ill, for aye divining—
 Giving up to tearful whining
 Every breath.
 Could our vision, outward reaching
 From the shore,
 See the realms of beauty stretching
 On before;

Could we note how scenes around us,
That so long hath cramped and bound us,
Pale before the bright beyond us,
You and I.

Scarce would reck how swift the speeding
Of the years—
Scarce would count, as now, with dreading,
Graying hairs;
From the surely coming morrow,
Hope and comfort would we borrow,
So to banish many a sorrow,
You and I.

With our faces up and onward
Tow'rd the light—
Through dispelling shadows sunward,
Through the night,
With a cheerful step, my brother,—
Sun, or storm, no matter whether—
Every year we'd come together,
You and I.

Breast to breast to feel the beating
Of the heart;
Mouth to ear, fraternal greeting
To impart;
Hand to back, for love's embracing;
Feet upon one level placing,
All unkindly thought effacing—
You and I.

There is something grand in living
To the line,
Just beyond which opens to us
The divine;
In our dealings with each other—
Conscience nevermore to smother—
Loving God, and one another,
You and I.

What if fortune frown upon us,
Night and morn?

What if daily toil hath won us
No return?

There's a wealth of treasures many,
Backed with but a crust, or penny,
That can make us rich as any,
Bye and bye.

Naked though be our condition—
Blind and poor:
We have but to make petition
At the door,
And, if worthy found and trusty—
Though perhaps a trifle rusty—
We shall find a welcome waiting
At the door.

Do we find an added furrow
Neath the crown?
Let us hope that for the morrow
Hath been sown
In it something for fruition,
In some not far off elysian,
So to better gain position,
Near the throne.

Doubtless many a head is whiter
With the snow
Than, when heart and step was lighter,
Years ago:
But if with the steady changing
Cometh but from ill estranging,
Trust the rest to God's arranging,
You and I.

True, we find of broken columns,
On its way
Goes the fun'ral march, and solemn,
Every day.

“Dust to dust ” the words repeating,
With a grim half-hungry greeting
Stands the sexton, calmly waiting
For his prey.

“Next,” he cries, and tears fraternal
Dim the eye,
Hands are clasped, and lips that tremble

Say good bye,
Just as if the soul, departing,
Went no further than the starting—
Stopped the journey with its starting
For the sky!

Yet, as Masons, if our living
Hath been right,
Why for us should be misgiving
For the night?
Charity our working leaven,
Facing toward the arching heaven,
Up we go, “Three, Five, and Seven,
Tow’rd the light.

What if many be thought deficient
Form or creed?
Substance should be held sufficient
For our need,
So that outcasts from each other,
Nevermore be friend and brother,
Loving, living for each other,
You and I.

A POEM.

READ AT THE INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS OF KING HIRAM LODGE, IN
BIRMINGHAM, 1870.

THE poet's pen sometimes will deal in fiction—
Sometimes to themes more serious, tunes the lay;
To-night, good friends, while giving benediction,
It weaves for you the epic of to-day.

Although the past is rich in admonition,
No backward glance should mar a scene like this;
And though the future promises fruition,
Enough for us shall be the present bliss.

Why vaunt the past? Its mystical traditions,
Like bones exhumed, fast crumble to decay;
While the dark shadows of its superstitions
Start back affrighted from the bright to-day.

Its mumbled creeds no more should mock or blind us,
With shallow 'semblance of the righteous way;
We face the light; the darkness lies behind us,
On this the morning of the great to-day.

In all God's plans no step is falsely taken;
'Tis evil only that goeth to decay;
The good, though slumbering, surely will awaken,
With gathered brightness for the coming day.

The olden time, its laws and constitutions,
We may revere, though we do not obey;
The present age asks for its institutions,
Not what they *were*, but what they *are* to-day.

Age is not wisdom, though wise men may be aged;
The tree is judged by th' sweetness of its fruit;
What e'er with wrong, a battle hath not waged,
The coming day shall wither to the root.

We travel "east;" "more light" is our petition,
More strength to tread life's rough and rugged way;
More love, and less of grovelling ambition,
To mark and mar the progress of to-day.

Let us be patient! Time turns no backward pages;
The good time cometh, though long upon the way;
Let us be hopeful! In the Temple of the ages,
The best work, and grandest, are the arches of to-day.

Yet methinks that we shall find—
If to search we are inclined—
That our social Temple—founded though on truth's eternal
rock;
And by master workmen planned,
Still was built by 'prentice hand,
And the polish still is wanting, upon each and every block.
While, within its living doors,
On the tessellated floors,
Lies the rubbish, which the centuries have gathered on their
way;
And we'll find enough to do—
Working faithfully and true—
To polish up our 'prentice work and clear the dust away.
For however much we may
Boast the fruitage of to-day,
Still, the worm of human frailty gnaweth steady at the core;
And, with all our pomp and pride,
It can never be denied
That want and degradation, like a dog, lies at the door.
Though the city spires on high,
Lift their fingers to the sky,
Yet beneath their solemn shadows, dark purlieus of sin
abound;
Where amid the cellar's grime,
Crouching misery and crime,
Gaunt and ghastly, ripens into bad fruition, underground.

And where e'er we turn our feet,
All along the crowded street,
Gilded dens breath hot pollution, from their teeming depths
below;
Where for freely proffered gold,
Human hearts are bought and sold—
Bought from paths of peace and virtue—sold to wretchedness
and woe.

Where the ghouls of lust do fatten,
'Mong the robes of silk and satin
Whirling 'neath the gaslit splendor of some Capitolean hall;
Men who make the laws for millions,
Take the corners of cotillions,
Side by side with undressed beauty, ripened ready for the fall.

E'en among our^happier homes,
Painted vice too often comes,
Clasping innocence and beauty in its leprous embrace;
Where amid life's giddy whirl,
Lost is many a precious pearl,
Soiled in many a robe of whiteness in the heat of passion's
race.

What with soirees and levees,
Masquerades and matinees,
From the chimes of Christmas morning, to the tolling bells of
Lent;
In the halls of shoddied wealth,
Ignoring all the laws of health,
Night is made one lengthened revel—day, one round of
discontent.

While across the ocean bed,
Flashing through a tiny thread,
Comes the sound of battled legions on the field of yesterday;
Now the topple of a throne,
Now a soldier's dying moan—
Rachael weeping for her children—such the message of to-day.

Yet we never need despair,
Better things are in the air—
Wrongs are but the incidentals which occur upon the way;
We are heading to the light,
We are living tow'rd the right,
And the coming man shall harvest from the seed we sow
to-day.

Here I, perhaps, should stop; and yet
'Twere quite ungallant to forget
Our guests, whose pretty faces,
Around our festive board to-night,
Like fair exotics, cheer our sight
And lend the sweetest graces.

What shall I say, and how begin ?
Ye muses, take my laggard pen,
And dipping it in glory,
Write lovely woman's spotless name
Most blessed on the scroll of fame,
While I relate a story.

When in his lonely, first estate,
Man sat within the garden gate,
And counted o'er each blessing,
With which his happiness was crowned,
By Heaven's providing hand, he found
One precious thing was missing.

Though lord was he of fowl and brute,
Though free to pluck of flow'r and fruit,
Whose names indeed were legion,
No loving hand was there, you see,
To make his toast and pour his tea,
In all that blessed region.

So, one day, sleeping in his tent,
Old father Adam underwent
A certain operation,

By which a spare rib from his side,
Presto! became a blushing bride,
Or some such new relation.

When Adam woke, with glad surprise
He rubbed his half bewildered eyes,
And at the quick suggestion
Of some one near, no matter who,
(I'll guess his name and so may you,)
He straightway popped the question.

Eve looked around, and at a glance,
She saw there was no better chance
For love or speculation;
And, (sad to say it, though I am)
She said, "I do not care A—dam,
I'll take the situation."

O, foolish man; not to have known,
That, letting well enough alone
Is best for every mortal;
Had he foreseen the end, I'm sure
That he had stopped at wedlock's door,
Nor crossed its ruby portal.

But human vision then as now
Stopped short of wisdom's gate, and so
The deed was consummated;
Though after all as this world goes
In all such matters, I suppose,
'They wer'nt so badly mated.

She stood "first lady" in the land,
He made the laws and gave command—
(A power he made the most of;)
And as for clothes and such like gear,
It does not in the Word appear
That either much could boast of.

Her dry goods bills were very small,
 She wore no "jute" or waterfall,
 Like many modern—noodles;
 And though her "pets" were no great shakes,
 I think, indeed, her talking snakes,
 Were quite as good as poodles.

But lest I tire you with my verse,
 I will not here the tale rehearse,
 About their worst besetter;
 Eve made a good wife in the main,
 Though once, 'tis said, she did "raise Cain,"
 But that was a *family* matter.

She never shied a flirting glance,
She never went to play or dance,
 With any man but Adam;
 Nor kept her lord awake o' nights,
 With stale demands for "Woman's Rights,"
 Because she always had 'em.

Fair daughters of the lovely Eve,
 Despite my nonsense, I believe
 In "God's last, best creation;"
 Not as a brawling partisan,
 Not an appendage made for man,
 But as a *worker* in God's plan,
 For this poor world's salvation.

And wheresoe'er plain duty calls,
 In shop, or field, or lecture halls,
 Or in the home elysian;
 Her chosen pathway to pursue,
 To *do* the thing she *best* can do,
 Tear down the old, or build the new,
 She need not ask permission.

Then let us all join friendly hands
 Across this board of social cheer;

And while old Time, with plummet, stands
To crown the arches of the year,

We'll ask that he will also lay
To-night for each and every one—
To stand for many a coming day—
A "Happy New Year" corner stone.

And though, to-day, is still our theme,
'Twere wisdom ne'er to quite forget,
That while our life is like a dream
Which pales before the vision, yet

Should we as Masons, true and good,
This lesson of the past time learn,
That who invests in brotherhood
Receives at last the best return.

Upon the sacred page we find
This truth inscribed above all others:
That we as children of one kind
And loving Father, should be brothers.

For, from the earth, alike we come,
To mother earth alike we tend;
One path we tread, one common home,
Invites us at the journey's end.

There's not that difference in the scale
Of human life that some pretend;
The cock may flaunt a rainbow tail,
And be a cockerel to the end.

High born, or low, 'tis all the same;
Who follows best God's righteous plan
For honest living, best may claim
The title of a nobleman.

Though humbly born, the "widow's son"
Upon a "level" walked with kings;
By acting well his part was won
That prize which honest labor brings.

Ere while from yonder crawling worm,
An airy form of beauty springs,
So many an humble human form
But half conceals the angel wings.

Let's have a care, then, how we tread,
Lest we bespoil some humble friend,
Who by a diff'rent path is led—
Whose life we may not comprehend.

And if, perchance, some brother stray
From wisdom's straight and narrow track,
Though Priest and Levite turn away,
Be it ours to lead the wand'rer back.

One may be weak, another strong—
E'en honest men may err most blindly;
And though the deed itself be wrong,
'Twere well to judge the motive kindly.

Oh Masonry! thrice honored art!
That buildest upward tow'rd the sun,
We'll follow still thine ancient chart,
And raise the temple stone by stone;—

That inner temple of the soul,
Which brightens with the ages' march;
Where love and truth shall find control,
And *manhood* crown life's Royal Arch.

THE OLD AND THE NEW.

READ AT THE CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF KING IIRAM LODGE,
BIRMINGHAM, 1883.

WHO stands, to-day, on yonder hills, that lift against the
South,
And hears the song of industry that fills the hungry mouth,—
The click and clack of countless mills;—may read a wond'rous
tale
Of what one hundred years have wrought to beautify the vale.

Lo! to the north, fair Paugassuck, from mountain hills, and
gray,
With willing hand to labor's wheel, comes tripping on its way;
While up the eastern valley, where suburban hamlets lie,
With scream of gong, on rapid wheel, the great steam chariots
fly.

The busy street; the churchly spire; the palaces of pride;
The great highways, where winged thoughts on lightning
coursers ride;
All these make up a wonderland, such as they could not know,
Who dwelt among these crowning hills, one hundred years ago.

Yet, little have we wholly new. Events are slowly born.
To prescient eye, the shades of night are pregnant with the
morn;
The rivers waited but command—the coming of the wheel,
To set the echoes ringing to the clangor of the steel.

The furnace of the future—in the quarry of the sires,—
In the clay yet to be moulded—stood in waiting for the fires;
The ships were in the forest, with the cottage, and the spire,
While the lightnings, ready harnessed, stood impatient for the
wire.

Call it God, or evolution; call it fate, or call it chance;
Deep within the soul of all things lies an impulse to advance;
As if, standing upon tiptoe, Nature, with upreaching hand,
From the great store house above her, some new glory would
command.

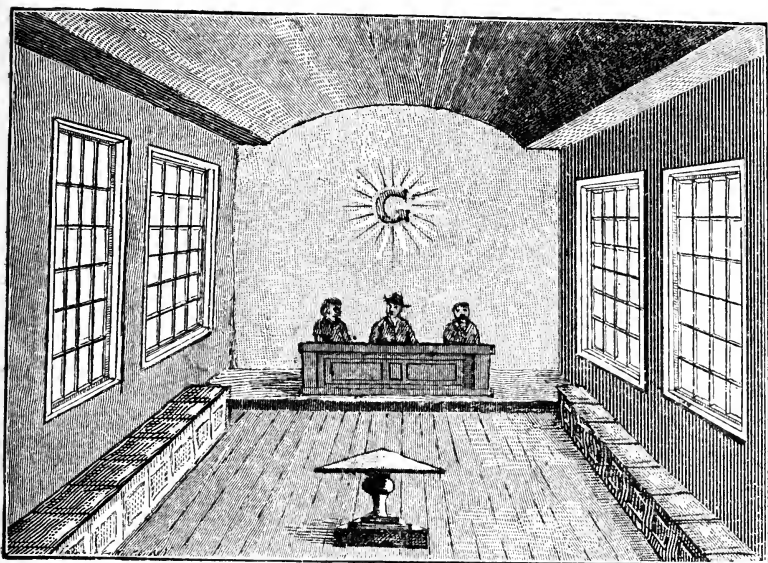
Stepping backward through the decades, look again upon the
vale !

There and here a lowly cottage, here and there a snowy sail.
Few and humble were the toilers that did, then, the valleys
know,
In the dawning of the morning of an hundred years ago.

War had sheathed its gory sabre; whipped, the lion sought his
den;
Tyranny had lost a battle; joy was in the hearts of many.
Yet, the taunting words, and bitter, "rebel," "tory," left a
sting,
Still were kinships half divided, for the Congress—for the
King.

Back to back, men stood in anger—by their burthens heavy
bound;
On the field, conscripted children slept the battle sleep, pro-
found.
"Well enough" had been disrupted, by scarce comprehended
war;
Wounds, like these, are slow in healing, healing yet they leave
a scar.

Churches, e'en, of old "established" 'neath the shadow of a
throne,
Stood aloof from other churches, centered in themselves alone.
Then it was that Hiram, lifting, in the vale its bannered sign,
Underneath some mystic symbol, taught of brotherhood divine;



[Interior of the old Lodge Room of King Hiram Lodge.]

Taught that strength lay but in union—union with some right-
eous plan;

Charity for all behind it—taught the brotherhood of man.

Hatred, malice, persecution, all at once upon the wing,

Back of each good word and action, charged some secret, evil
thing:

“Fiendish orgies!” “Vile blasphemies!” Tales of revelry by
night!

“Horrid oaths in secret conclave!” “Shunning darkness,
fearing light!”

Though the noblest of earth’s children bowed at this Masonic
shrine—

Leaders of the great world’s progress; priests and princes of
the line;

What availed it? Human judgment warpeth to its day and
time;

What to-day is spurned as worthless, on the morrow is sublime.

Look you ! all the great world over, evermore, it is the same !
Much of zeal, with lack of knowledge, makes the bigot, lights the flame.

Yet, because securely founded on the rock of living truth,
Masonry, unscathed, unblemished, lives to everlasting youth;
State craft, though it storm and threaten; bigots, though they
yet assail,

Both of Church and State the ally, what against it shall prevail ?

Awakening from a century tomb, if but this world of men
That live to-day—to-morrow sleep, may walk the earth again,
How strange will read the graven page, that, to their wondering gaze,

Shall tell the century's progress from these half primeval days !

Unscathed by time, or tempest shock, uprising from the shore,
Old Corum hills as firmly stand as in the days before;
And yet, how changed is all below ! A line of silver sheen—
Yet dwindled to a brooklet's span—Old Paugassuck is seen.

For, as the forests clear away, and swampy wilds are tamed,
The springs go dry—the falling rain, by envious skies reclaimed !
And yet, as fails th' accustomed flood from daily broadening shore,

The handful left proves stronger, e'en, than all that went before;

For, in a single drop, 'twas left for science to reveal
A mightier than the clumsy hand, that turned the ancient wheel.

E'en have the lightnings been subdued; and greater than of yore,

Their subtle forces have been made the servants of the poor.

The cot is lighted by their flame;—its fuel e'en supplied;
While swift upon electro steeds the hurrying people ride;

Or, in some airy flying ship, from land to land they go,
Shaking the dust from off their feet on th' whirling world
below.

E'en "dust to dust" no longer means a feasting for the worm,
For, in cremation's funeral urn—in concentrated form—
Wives, husbands, take the parlor shelf, the household gods
among,
Till, by successors, stored away—unhonored and unsung.

Woman, at last, the ballot holds. Obedient to her will,
Folds up his tent and steals away, the demon of the Still;
While, as of things but scarce believed, is pointed out some
den,
Where men, by law, once sold permit to drown the souls of
men !

E'en hath been proved the maxim false, that prateth of a
bourne,
In some beyond, and far away, from which none may return.
Life, life beyond, the ages' hope, breaks full upon the sight,
While death, itself, but-lifts the veil, and leads us to the light !

So, brothers, as King Hiram starts, on new centennial way,
We sketch the past—e'en as we can, forecast the future day;
Yet should we not forget, indeed, that, greatest our concern
Is with the present moment—that, by living, we should learn
To make our craft the keystone, that shall bind the mighty
arch,
Through which, toward the kingdom, shall the coming ages'
march;
To climb, ourselves, the mystic stair, so—helping hand to
reach
To brother's hand, stretched from below—we practice what
we preach.

For, are we not on trial? E'en King Hiram yet is young,
An hundred years as nothing count eternities among;



[Interior of the Present Lodge Room of King Hiram Lodge.]

The Great All Seeing Eye, above, looks down with jealous
care,
While justice takes our daily block and tries it by the square.

As workmen, on the muster roll, each one must take his place
In just proportion, as he builds to honor, or disgrace;
As he shall hew to selfishness, uncharity and wrong,
Or, to the kindlier graces that to brotherhoods belong.

To keep our manhood full in view, our passions in control;
To hold the flesh subservient to the welfare of the soul;
First, to be pure; then peaceable; then sober, upright, true,
Is what our Masonry should mean, to me, my friend, and you

Within its holy Temple, then, before its sacred shrine,
Dare not to bring rough sandaled feet, that cannot walk the
line

Of perfect soberness of life; much less, if on thy hands—
Through that which makes his feet to trip—thy brother's fail-
ure stands.

All hail to thee, King Hiram! Be thy years with honor
crowned,

In the widow's tearful blessing, as the centuries shall round;
Teach thy craftsmen to stand upright; on the level—by the
plumb,

To the voice of God and duty, that they nevermore be dumb,
So, as with each dawn, the shadows of the night shall clear
away,

From the East shall come the morning of a brighter, better
day.

BURNS TO HIS FRIENDS.

RESPONSE TO THE TOAST "ROBERT BURNS," GIVEN AT A MASONIC CELE-
BRATION OF THAT POET'S BIRTHDAY, IN BIRMINGHAM.

FROM warlds aboon the earth and moon,
To this gude brithers' meeting,
Wi' kindly ward, auld Scotia's bard
Wad bring fraternal greeting.
E'en, bending o'er this mystic floor,
Wi' craftsmen a' sae civil,
Wad tak a han' for brither man,
Wi' plumb, and square, and level.

But, harkee, frien'! Do ye na' ken
That whom ye wad be toasting,
Not lang aback the lads in black
Were ready for the roasting?

Such sinfu' lout as they made out
The rhyming Highland laddie,
Should scarce expect the world's elect
To gie the han' sae ready.

Hae ye forgat of proverbs, that
About the birds o' feather?
What matter, though, or yes, or no,
If but who meet together
Shall drink the wine of peace divine
In love's unstinted measure?
If naught of ill shall e'er infill
Our cup of social pleasure?

Forevermore! · Forevermore!
How lang they dwelt upon it!
A thousand years of woe and tears,
And Rab had just begun it!
For so, alack, the lads in black
Made woeful declaration;
But, dinna ken? there must hae been
Some slight miscalculation;

For through the dark, nor care nor cark
To make his han' unsteady,
Wi' self-respect, head full erect,
Went out your Highland laddie,
Firm in belief that every sheaf
Wi' human limitation,
That he might bring before the King,
Wad meet wi' approbation.

For conscious sin, it might hae been
That he had some misgiving,
When in the dust the sexton thrust
His carcase from the living;
But soon on high his raptured eye
Beheld the gate immortal,
And all along, a surging throng
Up crowding to the portal.

Wi' mony an old slave king of gold,
 Wi' tithes long time defaulted,
 And human owls—conceited fowls!—
 Wi' pious face exalted,
 Each, nature bent, wi' full intent
 To smuggle through the portal,
 From customs clear, such warldly gear
 As had survived the mortal.

While each proclaimed himself, and named
 The deeds on which were resting
 His claim to grace, or special place
 Of honor at the feasting,
 Poor Robbie sat, without the gate,
 Sae humbly at the portal,
 Nor dared recall one thing of all
 His doings in the mortal.

St. Peter took his ancient book,
 And read this general order:
 “Who enters here, no burthens bear
 Across the shining border;
 No filthy lust for golden dust;
 No pride of wealth, or station;
 Or unco' zeal for heavenly weal
 Through some puir soul's cremation.

“Who enters here are such as wear
 The garments of that meekness—
 In some good way, that comes for aye
 From conscious human weakness.”
 Then in the book he bade him look,
 And where had been recorded
 Ben Adhem's name, lo! by the same
 Was place for him accorded.

* * * * *

Though often wrang, my song I sang—
 I make nae idle boasting—

As heart inclined, for human kind,
Nor feared a final roasting.
For great or sma' the King of a',
The unco' righteous scorning,
Full well I knew wad give the true
His welcome in the morning.

The lads in black got mony a whack
For mony a provocation;
Not that I thought the things they taught
Bore not some good relation
To honest truth. Yet why, forsooth,
I asked, should bardie clever,
By Satan's rod be sairly prod
Forever and forever?

Sic wrang, indeed, by man decreed
To ony erring mortal
Wad bring the houn' of justice down,
An' kick him from the portal.
For why the name of justice shame
Wi' mercy less than human?
In fierce alarm, need heav'n to arm
Against the seed of woman?

Though at the gate men choose to wait,
What harm to the Creator?
Tow'rd heav'n, alack, each devious track
Winds heavenward soon or later.
A sorry knave, though, who would save
Himself through others' sorrow;
Who rests his hope, through heav'n to grope,
On what he hopes to borrow!

No, no, sair heart, bear thou the smart,
Fire burns the han' that takes it,
Sin's debt, as made, if fully paid,
Must be by him that makes it.

Yet all the years, amid the spheres,
 Reveals nae vale of sorrow;
 Nae grewsome lot, that love hath not
 Made brighter on the morrow.

* * * * *

Then, brither man, as best ye can,
 Upon the earth—your mither—
 Do as ye would that ithers should
 For aye, and with each ither;
 Nor fear and quake, lest heav'n shall make
 (As per the Orthodoxies)
 Of thee a roast, to please the host,
 In heav'n's proscenium boxes.

The lightnings flash, the thunders crash,
 The dauntless sailor warning;
 Black tempest rails, yet *never* fails
 The sunlight in the morning.
 So comes a night, when earth's rush-light,
 Must cease its feeble burning;
 Yet, courage, friend! That night shall end
 With sunlight and the morning!



IN MEMORIAM.

WRITTEN FOR THE MEMORIAL VOLUME DEDICATED TO M. W. GRAND MASTER
 ISRAEL M. BULLOCK, WHO DIED OCT. 20, 1879.



"I AM GOING WITH THE LEAVES."

NOT fun'ral wreath, nor lettered stone,
 Nor chiding word, nor honied speech,
 For battles lost or battles won
 The sleeping hero e'er can reach.
 E'en not the brazen trumpet's breath,
 Disturbs the calm repose of death.

Come hither, boy! yon lonely mound
Hides what was once like thee a child.
In loving arms encompassed round,
Joy filled his cup as love beguiled.
Fond hope entranced his prescient eye,
Nor deemed he then how time could fly.

'Years sped along, dream followed dream,—
Life's outlined charts, rough drawn,—until
Adown life's bright and shining stream,
Love took the helm and guided well.
Though sensual gardens lined the shores,
Yet stopped he not to pluck the flow'rs.

Fame's golden star his eye entranced,—
Fame, born of high and noble deeds!
Against the common foe's advance,
He saw among our human needs,
One barrier strong—least understood,—
E'en this our tie of brotherhood.

So learned he well that mystic trade,
Which buildeth high life's outer wall,
O'er-lapping blocks for "mutual aid,"
In love's cement imbedding all:
Beneath the shifting sands of youth,
He laid the corner-stone of truth.

Then like our ancient Master grand,—
Life's temple walls in beauteous line,
He sketched with ever faithful hand,
Embodying still the King's design.
Yet all too soon, the "widow's son",
Was in the Temple stricken down.

Ere yet his keystone bound the arch
That fain within its loving span,
Had gathered, for the ages march
Toward the good, this world of men;—

While yet, for him, Fame's garland weaves,
He falls, alas! like "autumn leaves."

But hold! my child, I talked of death;—

There is no death; I told thee wrong.
Dust claimeth dust; our mortal breath

Goes out as goes an evening song:
Yet that which moves the heart and brain,
Tombs cannot hide:—earth cannot chain:

That lives, and moves, and thinks, and speaks!

The life, the soul! all else is dust;
Twixt man and brute, *that* only makes,—
Talk as we will,—distinction just.
Life, soul immortal, thinking man!
Thine cannot be oblivious ban.

So live, my child, that when, at last
Shall strike the hour that bids thee come,
With garnered sheaflets from the past,
To make the river journey home,
Thou goest not like as one afraid
To meet some terror of the shade;

But like our friend, with spirit glad,—

While hope her smiling chaplet weaves,
In robes of honor, glory clad,

Go gently—like the "autumn leaves,"—
Upon the breezes, sweet and bland,
Of peace, into the promised land.

THE BLESSEDNESS OF MASONRY.

WRITTEN AS PART OF AN INTRODUCTION TO A MASONIC VOLUME.

LIFTING from the sands of ages, on the bleak Rhode
Island shore,
Where the early Norsemen landed, stands a castle built of
yore:

Every block out of proportion; laid by rude unskilful hand;
Yet with such well tempered mortar, as the ages to withstand!

Years to centuries have rounded; Nations have been swept
away,

Mightier castles, e'en, have tottered into darkness and decay.

Firmly, yet, these walls uplifteth on that wild New England
shore;

Beating back the angry tempests, laughing at the breakers'
roar!

Though for what was their uplifting, never may diviner guess,
Yet, to-day, they stand exemplars of that grace of faithfulness

Which doth keep its foothold firmly, clinging to the rocks
below,

Rocks of truth, for aye, heroic facing to the common foe.

So with this our mystic temple, builded on life's rugged shore;
Though with yet imperfect ashler, standing, yet, forevermore,

Firm, undaunted, with its turrets reaching to the skies above,
By the strength of that good mortar, two parts friendship—
three of love.

Though among the vanished ages somewhere lies its corner
stone,

Still it builds, and builds forever, never to be overthrown!

Call the roll of ancient workmen; bid them to the witness
stand;

Men of lowly rank and station, men the proudest in the land!

See! They come with ashlers chiseled well and truly to the
square;

Wanting though in some proportions, yet of strength and
beauty rare.

Listen to their faithful story, how they trod the valleys
through,

By the light that shone about them, from the old toward the
new.

Turn these pages of King Hiram, for his roll of workingmen;
Read between their lines the record of the vanished what hath
been:

“Vanished?” Nay, but that was wrongly spoken, since in each
“to-day”

All the good of all the past time lives forever and for aye!

* * * * *

Masonry is benefaction; ever at its door the sign
Biddeth, for the poor and needy welcome to its corn and wine.

For, behold, are we not brothers, children of the Holy One?
Shall of wheat be ours two measures, while our brother he
hath none?

Masonry is manly living! Who hath trod its tesseled floor,
Bowed before its solemn altar, standeth prouder than before;

Walketh broader paths of duty; mounteth to a higher plane;
Lives toward a better future, if he pledged him not in vain.

Masonry is human progress. On the walls of yesterday
To-morrow finds still upward courses, chiseled from the great
to-day.

Who shall say this loving order, young in heart, if not in years,
Caring for the poor and needy, scattering smiles but never
tears;

Making glad the heart's waste places; striving all the world to
bless!

Who shall say its loving labor hath not proved a blessedness?

THE DOUBLE FUNERAL.

SUGGESTED ON WITNESSING THE LOWERING OF A MOTHER AND SON
INTO ONE GRAVE, IN BIRMINGHAM.

Side by side, on that vernal day,
Together we laid them—mother and son:
She, with the frost of the winter gray;
He, with the autumn but just begun;

She, with her sheaflets of ninety years,
Patient that waited her Lord's command;
He, from the harvest of ripened ears,
Fresh, with the sickle yet firm in hand.

As a strong defence and up-holder, he,
To the poor, like the Knights of old,
Gave as he could of his gold, and free;
Or of love that was better than gold.

Slowly we marched, in solemn train,
To the tap of the muffled drum,
While the silent forms of the faithful twain,
Were borne to their final home.

The sword in the Knightly hand, and stout,
Was crossed o'er that lowly grave;
While the great Red Cross, through the crape spoke out
Of hope, and of One to save.

Brother of mine, on that solemn day—
In last embrace to a long repose—
Did we “lay them together?” I tell you nay—
Simply we buried their cast-off clothes.

Ee'n as I turned from that scene of gloom,
The buds that burst to the vernal breath,
Proclaimed—in spite of that closing tomb—
“There is no death, that there is no death.”

THE CLOSING OF THE LODGE.

I.

MOST Worshipful, a loud alarm is resounding at the gate,
As if some one seeking entrance at our portals did await

Attend the alarm, Junior Deacon! I would know who cometh
there!

See that none shall enter hither, coming not upon the square.

Worshipful, I find a stranger with a message from the King,
Which he bids me say, in person, to the Master he would
bring.

Junior Deacon, if he's worthy, and hath got the Master's
word,

You'll admit him to our presence, that his message may be
heard.

Stranger, what may be thy pleasure?—a messenger we hear,
Thou hast come from one above us, whom, as Masons, we
revere.

Most Worshipful, a greeting from his Majesty, the King,
Unto thee, His worthy servant, He commissions me to bring:—

And, from labor to refreshment, He would call thee to the
East,

As the one that He would honor at the coming harvest feast.

Stranger, we have heard your message; go report unto the
King,

That His servant standeth ready for the temple gate to swing.

II.

Brothers, we will close our labors. Warden, how doth go the
hour?

(High twelve, Most Worshipful.) Brother Junior, to the door!

Bid the Tyler to be wary, that no cowan shall intrude,
To disturb the closing service of this ancient brotherhood.

Brother Wardens, can you tell us how, as Masons, we should
meet?

Aye, "upon a level" truly. How should stand our parting
feet?

"Upon the square." Then oh, my brothers, by the plummet
of the right,
Standing upright, facing eastward, to the fountain of the
light,

Let us bear each other's burdens—taking each a noble share,—
So to meet upon a level, and to part upon the square.

III.

Here we part upon our journey:—*I* to heed the gavel call
Of the Master that hath purpose even in a sparrow's fall;

You to hew and lay the ashler till the purple morning grand
Shall behold our living Temple as the proudest in the land.

Like the wind, our breath is fleeting, here a moment, and 'tis
gone;
There's a tear that dries in falling on the mound upon the
stone.

Yet our deeds must live forever; then, my brothers, may you
bear

So the test of plumb and level, as to die upon the square.

There is something deep within me that is calling unto you,
My beloved, that would bid you, as the journey you pursue,

To forget not that the glory, which the forest now receives,
Very soon will have departed, with the falling of the leaves.

So, within, is ever calling, calling faithfully to you,
As good Masons, and as brothers, to endeavor to pursue.

So the pathway of your labor, that the glory of your sheaves,
Shall not fade, as fades the forest, with the falling of the
leaves.

Thus I close this lodge of Masons; with my labors I am
through;

I must leave you all, my brothers, with a Mason's fond adieu!

Yet I would not leave you grieving, as the unbeliever grieves,
Since from labor to refreshment, "I am going with the leaves."



PATRIOTIC.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MEN.

UP from the far Atlantic shore,
Old Sumpter's voice was heard,
And swift the winged lightnings bore
That ever-thrilling word—
Through village homes and rural farms
Your country calls, to arms! to arms!

Ah, well I mind me how they came,
From shop and furrowed field,
With kindled eye and hearts aflame,
The patriot sword to wield;
The pride of all our northern land—
What foeman could their shock withstand?

They came with many a tearful thought
Of dear ones left behind,
Of grand old hills, whence mem'ry brought
Her cherished scenes to mind;
Yet never backward turned their face,
Save but to take love's last embrace.

As, on that tearful Sabbath morn,
With firm and steady tread,
That band of heroes, newly born,
Their southward marches led,
I questioned if, indeed, they knew,
What it might cost to wear the blue.

And so I asked, "To deadly strife,
 Why goest thou, good sir?"
And, quickly, Kirkham, with his fife,
 And Chaffee with his snare,
Struck up old Yankee Doodle, grand—
That battle guage of Fatherland.

"Death lulls upon thy southern track,"
 I whispered manhood's prime,
And, buckling on the martyr pack,
 The answer came sublime,
"Since slav'ry gave to treason birth,
Our blood shall wash it from the earth."

"And thou brave Russell,—soul so rare!—
 Why go ye forth to die?"
His flashing sabre cuts the air,
 And, pointing to the sky,
With holy faith and courage bright,
"Forward!" he cries, for God and Right.

And these returning brave, that come
 To-day from ship and farm,
Thrice welcome to each loyal home,
 Protected by thy arm;—
Friends of her country in her need,
She treasures up each valiant deed.

Henceforth your camp fires flame afar
 With hope's benignant beams!
Henceforth, for aye, grim visaged war
 Is banished from thy dreams;
And hence may all life's journeys be
Triumphant marches to the sea!

Time speeds us on; each annual day
 Fresh furrows line the brow;
The head puts on the rebel gray,
 But th' heart still wears the blue;

And woe the cailiff that shall try
 To pluck your banner from the sky!
 That banner which, to every mast,
 Your strong arms helped to nail;
 Which, passing through war's furnace blast,
 Rides prouder now the gale,
 In every land, on every sea,
 The glorious guerdon of the free!
 Happy the land which thus can claim
 Such loyal sons her own!
 Within whose breast, that altar flame
 Of Spartan love hath grown;
 Which, e'en with life, defends the state,
 Nor deems such sacrifice too great.
 Cursed the hand, to which again
 Shall leap the treacherous sword!
 Palsied the tongue, from which amain
 Shall spring sedition's word!
 Land of the brave! from every ill,
 God help and keep and guide thee still!

IN THE ORANGE CHURCHYARD.

A SOLDIER'S BURIAL.

A CHEERFUL winter's sun that day shone all the hills
 around,
 And did its best to brighten e'en the dim old burying ground,
 Where brooding silence reigned supreme, save slowly as out-
 rang
 The belfry bell, or 'mong the pines the hollow March winds
 sang.

Around me ranged the village dead, with many a line that told
 Of worthy life, of peaceful end—the hopes of young and old.

Beside a freshly opened grave for some new-comer made,
A sexton stood, with bended head, and leaning on his spade,
Of whom I questioned of the dead, and who this answer gave,
"A soldier hath been mustered out—the bravest of the brave."

Back ran my thoughts to those great days when, sounding
near and far,
Went forth the stirring cry for men to rally for the war!

When kinsman against kinsman stood embattled on the plain,
And armies wheeled, where lately trod, but harvesters of grain!

But little had we known of war. Life? 'Twas a sacred thing;
Death? Of a right, what human hand such destiny could
swing?

The clouds went gath'ring deep and dark. An hundred dead
or so

Were noted—and forgotten in the next great crowning woe.

Men left their homes, shut up their shops, raked down their
furnace grates,

And fought until secession bowed, submissive, at their gates.

II.

Methinks, too oft, in careless way, we speak or think of him,
That in defence of commonweal, thus periled life and limb!

Yet, how should one that never drew the sabre from its sheath,
Or heard the whirling minnie's "ping," or took the cannon's
breath,

Know what it was to sleep or wake by noxious breezes fanned?
To march with torn and bleeding feet with death on every
hand?

To rot in prisons, or, perhaps, by battle fortunes spared,
To end the march upon a crutch infirm and silver haired?

All this came freshly to the mind, as with slow martial tread,
Up through the aisles the veterans came, and with their latest
dead—

A gallant lad—when days were dark, that heard the rallying
cry
On Oxford hills, and heart aflame, went forth to do or die.

Where might a veteran cheek grow pale, firm at the front he
stood,
With mother's kiss yet fresh and warm, baptized with fire and
blood.

Day after day where duty led, with brave though 'prentice
hand,
He fought the fight and kept the faith for God and fatherland.

III.

Years roll away. 'Neath brighter skies hope spreads alluring
wing;
Fresh joys, each brighter than the last, the changeful seasons
bring.

One fateful day, a poisoned shaft sped from the archer's bow,
And he that braved the battle death was laid in silence low.

To fold his tent no moment his, or for a last farewell;
Face to the front, in marching line, upon the track he fell.

Nor wife, nor child, could him recall, or stay his upward flight;
So in the dust, all that was dust was buried from their sight.

The veterans gathered round his grave, the last sad rites were
said,
And from their ranks one more had joined the "bivouac of
the dead."

The sexton heaped the loving earth with many a sorrowing
tear,
And wrote—what prouder could he write—"A soldier lieth
here."

NORTH AND SOUTH OF DIXIE.

READ ON A MEMORIAL DAY OCCASION.

I.

COME to our re-union, said your committee's letter;
Had it only added "Comrade," 'twould have sounded
much the better,
For I always "chum" the soldier; though to martial deeds a
stranger,
I like to share his glory, where there isn't any danger.

I know it is the custom, when old comrades come together,
To talk of haps and mishaps, as well as of the weather;
By the help, sometimes, it may be, of a rich imagination,
To recount of deeds of valor in some daring situation.

But the truth is, that our stories are just a little "mix" y,
Of the stirring scenes of camp-life on this northern side of
Dixie.

For, if e'er a foolish chicken paid the rental of its roosting,
It was never thought a subject for very much of boasting.

For, you see, among our people there was prevalent a feeling,
That to "forage" on a hencoop was equivalent to stealing.
On the other side of Dixie, a porker or a chicken
Was "contraband of war" just the moment it was taken.

The same was true of fences; for the chicken, if you took it,
By necessity demanded that you have a fire to cook it;
Besides, by your commission, in very many senses,
Each soldier was a chairman of commission on de-fences.

Yet despite such easy ruling, it was found in many cases,
That the question was prolific of some rapid change of
bases—

And some very tight-ish places!—

Unless, offended justice, in whose presence you were taken,
Was blinded for the moment by a slice or two of bacon.

'Course, we rather liked the notion of a big N to the Nation;
But we couldn't all go southward, for there wasn't transportation;

Besides, to bite the cartridge, we were lacking the incisors,
Or were otherwise disabled—yet were excellent advisers.

So we fell back on the mountains, while your battles were progressing,

Backing up *both sides of Dixie* with our prayers and with our blessing;

That you should not e'er be lacking certain comforts of the body,

We kept our mills a-running to furnish you with shoddy.

Even, lest from over-eating, should your usefulness be dwindled,

In the matter of your rations, it is even said we swindled (!)

In that we wormed the crackers and aromatized the bull!

But we knew you couldn't battle with your bellies over full.

When Uncle Abe grew angry and talked of our conscription,
A substitute we purchased of some nondescript description,
Or with northward turning faces, to Victoria's dominions,
We went off upon our "muscle" in defence of our opinions.

Yet we never meant desertion; whatsoever did betide you,
With an eye upon your movements, we might soon have stood beside you,

As some other fellows promised, through their crockadilian tears,

In that famous "Testimonials to our Derby Volunteers."

But, in fact, when all was ready for our movement, as intended,

Flashing northward came the echo that the bloody war was ended!

So we hastened back to offer you our best congratulations,
And restore the ancient status of our family relations.

II.

You have done the state some service; that I think will be
conceded,

Though you struck a little harder than, perhaps, occasion
needed:

For to us, in the safe distance, you did seem to be forgetting
To be careful, down in Dixie, of the head that you were
hitting.

For you never fired your bullets by the "doctrine of
selection!"

Whosoever stood before them, was a subject for dissection.

But the by-gones should be by-gones; things like these are too
unpleasant,

To be springing from the darkness of the past into the
present.

There is much to be forgiven; *we* are willing to forgive it—

There is something for out-living, and we hope that *you'll* out-
live it!

There is nothing small about us; what we ask is but a trifle;

Only this, that we may govern by the shot gun or the rifle;

To stand behind the poll box with a hand upon the trigger,

To preserve the proper status of the—blank—infernal nigger.

Pur-inciples! pur-inciples! can never go astray!

- "That which Lee and Jackson fought for, we are fighting for
to-day,"

As we storm old Castle William, and a gallant Union name

"Surrenders at discretion"—or without it—all the same.

We didn't like to take him as our "Moses," it is true,

But in our forlorn condition what the d——l could we do?

There was Tilden; but with Kelly and those terrible "dis-
patches,"

He would "cypher" up at 'lection mor'n an hundred thousand
scratches.

There was Hendricks—there was English; but the “English
of it” was,
That we’d got to have a leader that was loyal to the cause—
That the loyal people went for, or our little game was
“played;”
So we marched on Castle William, and our candidate we
made:

A chap that we’d been swearing was a robber and a thief!
A “satrap,” and a “minion”—of murderers the chief!
It seems a little curious to be training under him,
But necessity’s a tyrant, with a visage very grim.

Yet, suppose, my fellow mourners, suppos’n he’s elected,
(A thing in knowing circles that isn’t much expected),
Don’t you think that ’round the White House loyal colors will
be few?
And that Hancock, to be easy, will be putting off the blue?

(You bet!) and he will lead us into fat and easy places,
(Or we’ll be leading him when we get him in the traces;)
And we’ll take our seats at table, where without a moment’s
pause
The fattest bovine infant we will make a thing that was.

“Can he run our southern party—this blue bellied Union
Yankee?”
From the Toombs comes back the answer (jubilante) “No, I
thankee!”
With our ports and custom houses, fifty thousand safe in
hand,
We ourselves will do the “running” to the tune of Dixie
land!

But hold! I’m leaking secrets—party secrets, too, at that;
E’en like Toombs and brother Hampton, I’ve been kicking
o’er the fat:

"Didn't say it! didn't say it!" it is all a *Tribune* lie!
 Breathe it not though, down in Dixie, that our prophets we
 deny.

"Aint we goin' to do the fair thing?"—Mister Toombs, that's
 understood!

Stop hurrahing, ask no questions, we ain't half way through
 the wood!

If you can't use more discretion better shut your hungry
 mouth,

Or a solid North we'll bet on as "agin" a solid South.

III.

Soldiers, friends, if I have drifted into something out of
 tense,

If I've been a bit sarcastic on the fellows "in the fence,"

It is not that I would question the integrity of men

That may chance with me to differ, north of Dixie, now and
 then.

It is not that e'en the rebel hath done more or worse than I

Might have done in his position, down beneath a rebel sky;

Right or Wrong are names that color, by the accident of
 birth—

By the light that shines upon us—by the rounding of the
 earth.

But the law of self-protection gives the right to every man—
 Aye, the duty, as he sees it—to strike the best he can.

Since upon the South plantations opened wide the negro pen,
 With the "whirling of the mill stone," things have changed, but
 not the men.

Afric still upon the willows hangs her harp, without a string;
 Still the hands of haughty masters, would the bloody lashes
 swing;

Is it safe? Can we afford it? These are questions of the
 hour;

Northern men, can you afford it for the sake of party power?

“Hold the fort” the slogan soundeth! lo, the battle is at
hand;

Northern men, and you the victors! shall the ballot rule the
land?

Honest voting, honest counting! for the honor of the free,
These must triumph or go under; which, I pray you, shall it
be?

You that wore the Union armor in the day of noble souls,
With your honors thick upon you, can we trust you at the
polls?

Aye, indeed, there's little danger that the blue above the gray,
With the bait “Superb” can trap you, into treason's narrow
way.

Only get the matter clearly, trace its workings to the end,
And for which you paid so dearly that you surely will defend.

God preserve us through this danger, give us men that will be
heard,

For the Right in Hall or Manger—through the flesh or by the
Word;

Men too proud to *lie* for party; men too just to e'er *defame*;
Men to face the Wrong, whatever its connection or its name.
And although we may not see it, yet may as the years descend,
Th' stones keep on their grinding truth and justice to the end.

God protect us through all danger, make our Nation yet as
one;—

One in purpose—one in action, till the peace the bullet won,
Over all our broad dominions, shall its snowy wings expand—
East and West and North and Southward, even to the Dixie
land.

God preserve us and protect us! with the ballot give us still
Grace to take, and power to hold it, as against all threatened
ill.

Who is wrong let him be righted, who is right let him be true,
And firm, to back the glory of the dear old boys in blue.

Whom, may God sustain and keep them in the land they
fought to save,
Till—far hence—the grateful wreathlet falls upon an honored
grave;
Till the evening tattoo endeth with the morning reveille,
And the Gates of God resoundeth to the anthems of the free!

FOR MEMORIAL DAY.

AN ALLEGORY.

I STOOD one day by a sounding shore,
Where the dashing waves came in from sea,
When a dark-winged bird came sailing o'er,
And this was the song that he sang to me:
“Ever, forever, there is nothing more!
Death is a sea with no father shore.”
“But tell me, thou bird of the raven wing,
Tell me,” I said, “is there not a goal
In the realms beyond, from whence to bring
Some word of hope for the yearning soul?”
But he answered me back, “There is nothing more;
Death is a sea with no farther shore.”
“It is false, thou bird”—it was thus, I said—
“Else who are these that have traveled back,
Though in shadowy form—that were left for dead
On the trampled field, in their gory track?
The dead, yet living, who cannot die,
Or my faith hath told me a pitiful lie.”
“It may be true, but I cannot tell,”
For so did the bird make answering;
“There may be realms where the risen dwell,
Unreached, as yet, by my sweeping wing;
I will search again in the realms around,
And will come and tell thee if aught be found.”

The bird came back, but his raven wings
Had changed to snow, while his face outshone
As he told a tale of the beautiful things
That were over beyond where the sun goes down—
Of the hosts of the loving and living there,
That shone as the sun in the morning air.

And thus to the bird did I give command:
“Tell me of all those shining ones
Who dwell in the midst of that beautiful land,
Who, of the King, are the favorite sons—
Worthy the prize that have counted been?”
And he answered, “The men that have died for men;

That have bared the breast to the foeman's steel,
That have borne the march and the hunger pang,
Till was trodden oppression beneath the heel,
And the bells of freedom their pæans rang;
Till the chain was broken and all were free,
’Neath the banner of stars, from sea to sea.”

“But tell me,” I said, “do they e’er return
From their homes of peace on those distant shores,
With message of hope for those that mourn?
Do they gather about us—these friends of ours?”
And my heart beat quick lest he tell me nay,
And the joy of my years should be swept away.

But the bird looked up with so glad a mien
That my soul was thrilled ere he spoke a word;
And he said that “Forever around the seen
Was the great unseen, and the great unheard;
Yet seen and heard, by whose eye and ear
Should strive, in the darkness, to see and hear.”

I looked, and a host of the battle slain
Came through the smoke that had hid from view,
And a song that I heard was a glad refrain
That told of the men that had worn the blue;

That, for the right, had the battle braved;
The dead, yet living ! The saviors saved !

And thus it was said, " Though the bronze decays
As a flower succumbs to the autumn rime,
Yet heroes live through the whirling days
That come and go, to the end of time;
In deeds accomplished to human good,
For God, for truth, and for brotherhood."

THE DAY AND ITS LESSONS.

WRITTEN BY REQUEST OF KELLOGG POST, NO. 26, G. A. R., AND READ
IN CONNECTION WITH THE CEREMONIES OF DECORATION DAY, AT
BIRMINGHAM, CONN., MAY 30, 1871.

ONCE more our feet the winding pathways tread,
Through this pale city of the silent dead:
Whose marble doors are closed alike on all,
Who come from cottage, or from palace hall;
Whose roofs, grown green beneath the vernal showers,
We thatch, to-day, with living, loving, flowers;
Whose shafts memorial, lifting up on high
Their chiseled fingers to the bending sky,
With tongueless eloquence each deed proclaims,
Of these, our heroes, and embalm their names.

Once more we come, the oft-told tale to tell,
How these men died, how bravely and how well;
How Russell heard, when Sumpter's thunder woke
The northern echoes, and at Roanoke,
How he hauled down what treason's hand up-ran,
And sealed with blood his legacy to man.
How Kellogg, brave, and Hotchkiss, good and true,
And Lee and Barker, donned the nation's blue,
And with a host of other names as fair,
Sent howling back Secession to its lair.

Aye, tell the tale again, and yet again,
'Twill ne'er grow old while memories remain,
Of those dark years, when hideous Slavery's thong
Bound boasted freemen to the car of wrong;
While we, poor souls, that joined the hounding pack,
And, quoting Paul, did send the bondsman back
To unpaid labor, neath the oppressor's rod,
In Israel learned that there was yet a God,
Whose 'venging hand the stripes could full repay,
From freedom's door who turned his child away.

O Watchman, standing in the dawnlight gray,
If night be passed, tell us what of the day?
Have men learned wisdom from the fulfilled word,
"Who takes the sword, shall perish by the sword?"
Out from the lurid flame and crash of war,
Pluck we the flow'r of peace? and, shall our star
Of Empire shine undimmed forevermore,
By fratricidal strife? From shore to shore,
Shall narrow caste and prejudice of race
To human love and brotherhood give place?

Behold, a vision! On this, fair freedom's soil,
Goes the scarred bondmen to his unpaid toil;
Friendless and homeless, hopeless and forlorn,
His anguished cry a nation laughs to scorn;
While burlesqued justice, in her ermine decked,
His right denies to brother man's respect;
His wife, his child, himself but merchandise,
Nothing his own beneath the azure skies.

The years roll on. An old man hears the cry
Of struggling weakness, and his pikemen fly
To break the oppressor's rod. E'en their small tread,
Pales guilty southland with foreboding dread.
A wounded pris'ner in a dungeon lies,
A gibbet rises and a martyr dies.
God's wheels roll on. Where John Brown's pikemen trod.

A million foemen drench the gory sod,
And torch and flame amid the clash and din,
Burn out the blackness of a nation' sin.

Again the scene is changed. The war cloud lifts,
And trem'bling down between the opening rifts,
Come gladsome rays of industry and peace;
The scarred earth yields, once more, her fair increase
To sturdy arms, that for the peaceful spade,
Throw down the musket and the gleaming blade.
The dusky toiler, at the free man's door,
Casts off the shackles which the vassal wore;
And standing forth beneath the skies erect,
Asserts his manhood, and compels respect.

And e'en though scourged to destitution's door,
The master's self is richer than before;
For though he dine upon a scantier bone,
His labor earned it, and it is his own.
From aimless ease his tardy footsteps go,
To learn at length man's business is to grow,
As grows the germ which from the acorn springs,
And reaches on tow'rd higher, better things.

THE NEW DIXIE.

I.

THE sword of our fathers had gone to rust,
Or had turned to the reaper's blade;
The plume of the soldier was out of date,
As the mark of an ancient trade;
The sound of the loom and the hammers' blow
In the workshop, and in the mill,
With the song of the ploughman, was heard afar
In the valley, and on the hill;

The skies above us were calm and clear;
 The prosp'ring sun ran high;
 When out of the south in a moment's time
 A tempest o'erspread the sky;
 The click of the hasty lock was heard
 On the door of the shop and mill,
 And the ploughman took lessons in battle craft
 By th' light of the midnight drill.

The polished blade of the plough was left
 To rust in the earth beneath,
 And the sickle again was a reaping hook
 In the hand of the reaper—death.
 The tempest came with its whirling breath,
 And its armies of mighty tread,
 To leave, at last, in its wasted track,
 An hundred thousand dead.

* * * * *

A sword, a sash, and a soldier's coat,
 Is hung on the cottage wall,—
 With a manly face in a golden frame,
 And a banner enwreathing all;
 The banner is tattered and battle worn,
 But its union hath all the stars;
 And the captain's coat hath a bullet mark
 Just under the shoulder bars.

I read in the record, "He bore the flag
 In the teeth of a fiery hell;
 And his sword was grasped in his cold right hand,
 In the morning, where he fell."
 Swift, over the wires, a reinless steed
 A message of sorrow bore,
 That tied with a never dissolving knot,
 The crape on the cottage door.

* * * * *

Forgiveness? Yes, tis a kindly grace;
 If God can forgive the crew,

That drove the hearse to the Nation's door,
We ought to forgive them, too;
But what if, while making the welcome feast,
At our gate the prodigal pause,
To flaunt in our faces the tattered rag
Of his "lost" disunion "cause?"

And where shall concession draw the line,
And justice assert her right?
And shall we preserve at any cost,
The victories of the fight?
I said that my brother had wiser grown
Since the morning that Sumpter burned;
And I hastened to level each grassy mound
Where memories lay inurned.

I said it shall be as it had not been!—
I will wipe every tear away,
And I'll sit me down in the joyful hope
Of a brighter and better day.

But I spake in haste—'twas too early yet;
With the heat of the Southern clime,
What wonder, indeed, that it only yield,
To the cooling hand of time?
So many were they that could not see,—
For anger is ever blind—
Th' ambitious hand, that the peace of years
To the furnace blast consigned;

To scorch and burn until homes were not,
And estates were swept away!
And the realm of hope was a bygone thing,
If men could have had their way!
But destiny held us together well;
Somewhere in the upper sky,
Was a hand that guided our broken helm,
Till the whirling storm went by:—

And the dove returned with the olive branch,
 That told of a solid shore,
 Where might rest the ark upon higher ground
 Than ever it knew before.
 For destiny knoweth no backward step;
 E'en through a sea of blood,
 The child up climbs to a higher plane,
 Than that where the father stood.

* * * * * * *

Though fierce the fires of the chemist, death,
 Shall we count all struggle lost?
 The gold that remains in the crucible,
 Would we barter for what it cost?

Swift on the wings of the morning speed
 To the heights of our summer land,
 And on some "Lookout" of battle note,
 For a moment take your stand:

See! down in the smiling vale below,
 The gifts of the fruitful soil
 Respond to the not unwilling blow
 Of the self-paid son of toil,—

Imperilled, for aye, by lash or block,
 Or fangs of the cruel hound,
 While nestling under some shadowy rock,
 Is the home of contentment found.
 With the ripple of waters, that turn the wheel,
 And the whirr of the spindles play,
 Comes the clank of the hammer that moulds the steel
 To the needs of a newer day:—

The loom comes down from its northern slope,
 To the plains of the waiting South,
 To sing the song of a child of hope,
 That was born at the cannon's mouth.
 For men may sow to the tempest's breath,
 But the seed in its wayward fall,

Is quickened to fruitage, th' soil beneath,
By the hand that is over all.

And if, with the harvest, shall come, O South,—
Whatever the seed time cost,—
The fruits of a larger and better growth,
Thy "cause" hath been never "lost;"
Though knowing not to what end he fought,
No hero hath died in vain,
That helped to figure man's problem out,
On the slate of thy battle plain.

Fling open the blinds! let the sunlight in!
Let the incense of freedom rise;
Let the patriot song of "Our Union" ring
To the dome of our azure skies!

And our eagle shall rise upon splendid wing
To the realm of unclouded sun,
While an hundred millions the anthem sing
Of an hundred states in one.

But you tell me "nay, 'tis a dreamer's dream,"
And you echo the doubter's cry,
Of "smouldering embers," and "latent flame"
Of a treasure that will not die;—
That lurks on the flank of outgoing years,
To chew o'er the cud of its sin;
That bows to its idols, or sits in tears
For the battles it could not win!

But what if the beaten gods do swarm,
In the depths of some hidden cave?—
Or it secession in spectral form,
Break out of its sodden grave?
It is but as the smoke of the battle fray;
The wreck of some bubble burst;
Or the harmless thunder that howls away,
When the lightnings have done their worst.

As our nation stood around Garfield's bed,
On that pitiless summer's day,—
By the tears that fell, or the words that were said,
Could you tell me the blue or gray?
Some heads had erred in the angry strife,
But a moment had buried all
In a common grief; while a newer life,
Was born with the ruffian's ball.

THANKSGIVING FOR VICTORY.

GOD of our fathers, low
Before Thy throne we bow,
With thanks to Thee:
For this, our country dear,
That Thou our prayer did'st hear,
And did'st her standard bear
To victory.

On southern plains afar,
Above the din of war
The sound goes forth;
The swarthy millions hear
These words of lofty cheer,
And welcome their new year
Of Freedom's birth.

From eastern mountain side,
From western prairie wide,
From sea to sea;
Let this glad song arise
Up to the bending skies,
Truth lives and error dies,
WE'RE FREE, WE'RE FREE!

Columbia, thy domain,
 From slavery's hated chain
 Shall now be free;
 And MAN shall stand upright,
 Beneath the broad sunlight,
 A *freeman*, in his might,
 Though black or white.

God of our fathers, low
 Before Thy throne we bow
 With praise to Thee;
 That Thou our prayer did'st hear
 For this our country dear;
 Vouchsafe her flag to bear
 "A thousand years."

DON'T FORGET THEM.

Do not forget them. The summer is due;
 The roses are tardy; the lilies are few;
 And yet in the woodlands, and yet in the bowers,
 Somewhere, I know, there are beautiful flowers.

Do not forget them—wherever they sleep,
 With earth for a pillow in silence so deep !
 What though the flowrets be many or few ?
 Twine, as ye can, for the men of the blue.

Do not forget them, though, over their bier,
 We give to them only the meed of a tear;
 Give them remembrance as men that were true;
 This, at the least, to the soldier is due.

If we forget them—ah ! what if we do ?
 Losers are they, then, these soldiers of blue ?
 Nay: for I say to you, friend—in a word—
 Losers are they that have duty deferred.

MY FATHER'S FLAG AND YOURS.

READ AT THE DEDICATION OF THE SOLDIERS' MONUMENT IN BIRMINGHAM.

I STOOD beneath a southern sky, and on a mountain's brow;
A troubled cloud lay like a pall, enshrouding all below,
From which a sound of thunder told of evils dire concealed
Beneath its folds; some destiny of darkness unrevealed.

I looked again; the cloud was gone, while, speeding from the
vale,
Upon a shadowy steed, and white, I saw a rider pale;
And, as he rode, ten thousand graves uplifted from the sod
Of trampled field, and bloody plain, where late the foemen
trod.

I heard the clank of falling chains—forever silent now;—
I saw the crown of manhood placed upon the ebon brow,
And then, from every tower and staff, along our southern
shores,
Unquestioned swung our starry flag—my father's flag and
yours.

Through northern streets again was heard the loud triumphant drum,
As, with his tattered battle flag, came "Johnny" marching home
With trophies earned through toilsome years—or stripe or
shoulder bars;
To tell, beside the crowning hearth, his story of the wars:—

E'en to rehearse how haughty sons of fair Car'lina's shore,
Had learned of "chivalries" that spurn oppression from their
door;—
How had been taught the head to bow, wherever on our
shores
Swings from the mast yon starry flag—my father's flag and
yours.

Upon this block, to-day unveiled—to loving fame enshrined,—
The names of half forgotten men on glory's list we find.
“Forgotten?” Aye; yet, only as the tree forgets the blow:
The surface heals, yet evermore is found the scar below.

E'en by faith's sharper, closer sight, between each line is read
Of these still marching ranks to join the “bivouac” of the
dead;
Where tenting out on heavenly plains, through life's long end-
less day,
With crossing palm to friendship true, shall meet the blue and
gray.

Heroic men! Before this shrine with bowed, uncovered head,
The patriarchs of all coming time, with reverent feet shall
tread
To point thy deathless names, and oft with Spartan fondness
tell,
How for the right, as 'twas revealed, we battled, and how well.

Heroic men! Till yonder bronze shall melt and pass away;
Until the soft'ning granite e'en shall crumble to decay;
Until, indeed, Old Time forgets the winding of his clock,
Like him who stands transfigured on yon proud uplifting
rock—

So may our blood-bought union stand upon the rock sublime
Of truth, and righteousness and peace, throughout all coming
time:
That, looking down from glory heights, forever ye may know
That was not lost your sacrifice for native land below.

What sought the north in Dixie land? Why tempted men the
grave?
Was it, alone, that they might break the shackles of the slave?
This came at last, in God's good time, yet at disunion's door,
The great boon sought was that their arms the Union might
restore.

They heard the sounding story of old Sumpter's gallant crew,
And throwing down th' accustomed spade, the plucky sword
 they drew,
And hurling back defiance to secession in its lair,
They fought and prayed, and with their guns did answer back
 the prayer.

What if, sometimes, the John Brown "soul" within their
 breasts repined ?

With steady front yet "marching on" was left their homes
 behind,

Unquestioning the future or the path that it must tread:
Enough to hear God's bugle call and follow where it led.

And were they then fanatics ? What if we call them so ?
"Fanatics" are the men that lead this human world below:
Forevermore, for conscience sake, they tread some Plymouth
 Rock,
Or feed the flame, or swing the beam, or cross the crimson
 block.

"Fanatic" and "heretic" were the words the viper hissed,
When the foot of human progress trod upon its slimy nest.
"Heretic" to the dogmas by the fathers handed down:
"Fanatic" in the holding that—a man should be his own !

Where Garrison and Phillips stood, to-day the nation stands—
Thanks to the cannon and the sword—with freedom in its
 hands,

Forgetful and forgiving e'en to all upon our shores
Who dared to trail in slav'ry's mire, my father's flag and
 yours.

Yes; 'twas a costly victory. But who shall count the cost,
When measured by the glories that so nearly we had lost ?
Shall we not, then, whose eyes have seen what was to them
 denied,
Who for the sake of freedom's cause, went down beneath the
 tide

That surged and broke from cliff to cliff on southern shores
away,
Shall not we lift our grateful thanks for this our glad to-day?

Thanks that free thought—untrammelled speech—if willing
men, or no,
Goes on with strong resistless wave, like some great river's
flow—
That sweeps away the sunken wreck and spreading o'er the
plain,
Leaves as its boon still richer soil to feed the summer grain.

Thanks for these gallant cavaliers, that trod the earth and bold,
With sword in hand and shouldered arm, till tyrannies of old
Were counted as the things that were; and, marching to the
sea,
The clank of falling chains kept time to the song-burst of the
free.

And yet how great was found the task of tearing down the
old
To build the new, a million graves their tearful tales unfold.
Since in their blood our heroes laid for us the corner-stone,
Let it be ours to hew the walls to models of our own;

To build to true forgetfulness of color, race, and clan:—
Of all that, in the past, hath set the man against the man,
So, north and south, from sea to sea, assurance shall be ours
That hence, forevermore shall float my father's flag and yours.

Misleader of the bravest brave that ever trod the stage,
Go stand aside from human view, that, e'en from memory's
page,
Be struck the name that but recalls those bitterest, darkest
years,
Which bound the crape upon our doors, and bathed our land
in tears.

Or, better: stretch thy guilty hand across the bloody line,
And swear to nevermore desert your father's flag, and mine:
E'en bending down beneath that full repentance that restores,
Forgiveness ask before the shrine of your great dead, and ours.

What though with ghoulish hand ye stirred the embers of the
past,

Invoking e'en the withering flame, of war's red furnace blast?
As well to turn yon dial hand upon a backward way,
And hope to keep the pulse of time from marking off the day.

The train moves on, from age to age!—their corpses, cold and
black,—

The men that block progression's way, lie thick along the
track.

Howe'er is pressed our puny "break," the great swift wheels
go on,

And up the steep ascent of time toward the eternal noon.

Who shapes the end by men rough hewn, securely sits the
throne,

Though discontent may swagger till its fields are oversown
With weeds of shiftless husbandry, and o'er its cities tall,
Grim desolation's hand may fling oblivion's dusty pall.

There comes a time, O fallen chief, when, where the chattel
trod

Before thy lash, shall yet be found the victories of God:
In altars raised to thankfulness on *all* thy sunny shores,
That treason failed to tarnish e'en your father's flag and ours.

COMPANY "Z."

OF THE HOME GUARD, 1883.

PROUD to be hailed as comrade by this gallant fighting
corps,

I got your welcome summons, boys, and straightway to the
door

Brought up old war Pegassus, all accoutered, "cap-a-pie,"
To charge upon these Cheshire hills with staunch old Company
"Z."

Sometimes you fellows that went in so fierce to the melee,
Because we held our head so dear, have sneered at Company
"Z."

But, boys, I'd rather here, to-day, partake of Cheshire bread,
Than to have lain these twenty years among the bravest dead,
That ever bivouacked with the worm in southern march or
fen,

Or stifled in the fetid air of Libby's prison pen.

"Glory?" Oh, yes! See, on the height the red-mouthed rebel
gun!

At every flash, in writhing death, goes down some mother's
son;

Some husband, father, that hath left his memories behind,—
Wife, children, friends—for what but this? to die for human
kind.

But what cares "humankind" for him? or for his deeds so
brave?

By whom are cast the memory wreaths that freshen on his
grave?

Not often by for whom he gave his heart's best blood and
warm,

But by who fought the battle through, survivors of the storm.

Aye, take your laugh at Company "Z," but in your moments
cool,

Say, if a thousand times, you did not vote yourself a fool
For turning back on happiness, to fight his battles through,
That would not lift a finger to befriend a "boy in blue."

Ah! could they but half comprehend the struggle that hath
been,

Men were not found ungrateful, quite, to whom hath died for
men:

To read in cold black lettered line, how, struggling with the
tide,

Of fiendish strife, somewhere afar, an hundred men have
died:

Mangled, and torn, and trampled 'neath the charging squad-
ron's hoof,

Was but "an incident of war," save to some cottage roof,
When came, with crushing weight, the news that Private
Brown, or Jones,

Upon some far off battle sod had left his whitened bones.

God ruleth justly, well, we say; yet do the sparrows fall,
While strengthens He the vulture's wing above the forests
tall?

Was not the Chaplain used to say of Him that rules on high,
"The soldier that shall ask the boon—He'll send the bullet
by?"

But, didn't you see, an hundred times, the praying soldier
fall,

While some vile, bounty-jumping wretch went safely through it
all?

Death, somehow, always seemed to choose the best of any two!
I could not understand it then; I cannot now—can you?

A single life, save to itself, is little after all:

The merest trifle in the scale of this terrestrial ball;
And whether hurrying to the front, or scurrying to the rear,
The difference we may scarcely note in that millennial year,

When time hath worked the problem out, perfecting from the
clod,

By fit survivals of the best, the ideal of a God.

So here among the Cheshire hills, 'neath this reunion tree,
I give, to all, the friendly grip of Mythic Company "Z,"
Which, though it shirked the battle test, with rebel stripe and
bar,

Nor dipped its sword in human gore amid the clash of war,

Yet represents the mighty host, that followed, year by year,
The Union cause, with loyal soul, and backed it with a tear
That welled up from the pockets, till, triumphant in the wars,
Uprose, above secession's might, one flag with all the stars.



OCCASIONAL.

OLD AND NEW.

READ AT MEETING OF PRESS REPORTERS, MERIDEN.

IN days of old, when Great Jehovah sat in state on "Awful
Throne,"

Smiling on who sang his praises—frowning at who gave him
none,

Fearing that their humblest serving might have, somehow, in
the past,

Proved without avail, our fathers organized a solemn fast.

Hoping thus by abstinence for a time from meat and drink,
Better of his erring children so to make Jehovah think,
Though with sinful needs as many, yet (unlike our fathers)
we

Keeping to the old observance, spell our fasting with an E.

Trusting, doubtless, all, and fully for the coming bye and
bye,

That howe'er our forms be battered, and our *matter* go to *pi*,
Yet, of time, will there be ample under some eternal roof,
Full to *justify* our *pages* and *correct* our every proof.

* * * * *

I have never fought a battle with a bullet-loaded gun—
Always thought that, had I done so, I had been the first to
run;

Never have I played at football with the dynamite, nor e'en
Have I tried the rapid transit of the servants' kerosene.

Yet that one is lacking courage, in this honored presence,
 who
 Dares the role of a spring poet, cannot be entirely true,
 For than dynamite or bullet to the weaver of spring verse,
 Reports from your exploding pencils might a thousand times
 be worse.

Therefore is it all my asking, that you kindly hear me
 through,
 While I sing of God and Progress,—of the old and of the
 new.

* * * * * *

Once a tree was stripped of branches—down among its root-
 lets dark,
 Something rallying wondrous forces, pushing outward through
 the bark:
 Bursting buds as if for breathing—moulding, by some mystic
 power,
 From the upward flowing juices, branch, and twig, and leaf, and
 flower.

Though denounced as pantheistic, I shall say that God was
 there,
 God, as Life, as growth, or progress—God whose throne is
 everywhere;
 Even He that leadeth nations through the waters, through the
 mire,
 Out of darkness, out of bondage, by the cloud and by the fire.

* * * * * *

Outward from our cabin window looking tow'rd the setting
 sun,
 One might think the world without him bounded by the
 horizon,
 While, in fact, beyond the hilltops, and beneath some farther
 sky,
 Sunsets turned to morning splendor on the eastern summits lie.

Thus, among his temple builders, sat the princely Solomon,
In despairing words declaring, "Nothing new beneath the
sun ;"

While beyond his petty vision worlds of mighty truths, and
grand,

Unrevealed, and all about him, waited time's unveiling hand:—

Waited for men's evolution—for the talking of the wire,
For our types and printing presses, for the forge and for the
fire.

Never, in his wisest moment, could this kingly mortal tell,
Why to earth, and never skyward, was it that the apple fell.

Day and night came, and forever by the sun's diurnal round;
Earth was flat, and firmly anchored, right side up in the
profound,

While, unto his inner vision, only this, to him was true,
God was God, and all creation was created for the Jew.

* * * *

Under time's eternal arches moves the great procession on;
Judah, captive 'mong the willows, sitteth down by Babylon.
Seasons pass, and months and ages; underneath the crescent's
blaze,

Judah struggles with the Moslem and for Calvary she prays.

Then the flashing of the helmets of the long crusading
line,

Fired by hatred of the crescent, 'mong of the hills of Pales-
tine,

Bringeth down the age of sorrow to the christian, as the
Jew—

Drops the vail upon the old time—lifts the curtain on the
new.

* * * *

Now behold the doughty pilgrim, and the wilderness pro-
found!

Through the forest aisles and arches how his Sabbath bells
resound!

Deep among the mighty shadows, groping blindly for the
true,

Fearing God, and hating tyrants, yet, himself, a tyrant too.

Steam, to him, gives no revelation of the wonders of its
power:

Kettles struggling with their forces are but kettles boiling
o'er:

Lightnings flash a proffered service, stretching forth a willing
hand,

But they speak, as in a language that are none to understand.

King of earth is brawny muscle. Science, brains, of little
worth,

By the side of spade and shovel for the tilling of the earth.

Only love hath lightened labor, woman is the needle's slave;

Never yet hath wheel of "Singer" sang a single labor stave.

Yet is here and there a whisper of some future glory found,

Here and there a head uplifting, waiting to be crowned.

Ever as they travel onward by their rugged way appears,

Something great in bud or blossom left to ripen with the
years.

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Pulpits do not all the preaching, have not all the gospels
quite,

Left to such, alone, forever hath remained earth's mental
night.

Back of all, upon the picture, plain is the line outdrawn,

Marking where our ancient craftsmen from the shadows woke
the dawn.

Guttenberg, or Faust? What matter which the favorite of
fame?

Over both, in some proportion, doubtless heav'n's afflatus
came.

Working out their mighty problem, with an energy sublime,

Lo! the carvers at their benches carving out the coming
time!

Crude the lettered blocks, and simple, yet is heard from age
to age
Hammer's blow that locked and bound them for the world's
first printed page.
Heard the blow that rudely shattered priestly shackle, kingly
chain,
Levelled up the grade of manhood, wrought the empire of the
brain.

Back returning to the present, what might these old craftsmen
think
Of a press, upon a morning, 'eating up a ton of ink ?
Some three hundred thousand papers, Sabbath morning to
beguile !
For a single day's edition—measuring paper by the mile !

Proud although of past achievements, peering out into the
day,
Still the Present—head uncovered—standeth in the dawnlight
gray;
With its face turned never backward, but toward the over
blue,
“Neath the sun,” or far beyond it, seeking yet for something
new.

Lo the cloud and fiery pillar! Canaan only just ahead!
Who shall prove a better leader than they that have already
led ?
Than the men that are out-marshalled and in line upon the
plain,
Pen in hand and ready harnessed—men of heart, and men of
brain ?

From the sunshine, from the shadows, from the highways and
the slums;
From where'er is raging battle, to the press reporter comes;
He has raked the social gutter for a bit or two of spice
That may suit the morning palate, if it be not over nice !

He has interviewed the parson with a deferential awe,
E'en, perhaps, has played detective in the interest of law;
He has studied human nature, but to find it very mean,
Where was meanness from appearance, least expected to be
seen:—

While, perhaps, among the lowly—handicapped from very
birth,
Has been found, indeed, the proudest and the bravest of the
earth.

In his hands the peace and welfare of the family is placed,
Though the men that by their follies have the innocent dis-
graced;

And he gets a malediction, or a blessing on his head,
By the words that must be spoken, or the words that are not
said.

So he gathers and he garners of the day and of the hour:
Sometimes welcomed, as he should be—often frozen from the
door.

Out is thrown uncounted papers, pages of life's open book;
But who made it hides within it, as the river hides the brook.

So, companions, would I counsel that our future path be led,
Not as 'mong the glinting statues of some crypta of the dead,
But along the living present, with our banners all unfurled,
And our hand upon a lever that is moving on a world.

We are one yet are we many: one in mission, purpose, aim;
Many for the temples building; one to keep the altar flame.
Ours it is to pierce the cloister, letting in the light sublime;
As each broken sash reveals it, sweeping down the web and
grime;

Ours to keep the faith of ages, only as that shall be true,
Building broader, building higher, than our fathers ever knew;
Ours to lead emancipation from all tyranny of ills—
From the bigotry that bindeth, and the ignorance that kills.

JUST TWENTY YEARS AGO.

[THIS POEM WAS READ BY MR. STORRS AT THE CELEBRATION OF THE
TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS WEDDING.]

JUST twenty years ago, wife,
 (How swiftly flows the tide,)
I promised true, for weal or woe,
 To take you for my bride;
With radiant beams of hope, wife,
 Our sky seemed all aglow,
For love's young dream was then our theme,
 Just twenty years ago.

Ah! well do I remember, wife,
 (But yesterday it seems,)
The airy castles which we built
 In those bright morning dreams;
And how, when up the stream of life,
 We paddled our canoe,
We placed love's angel at the helm,
 Just twenty years ago.

Sometimes the dashing waves, wife,
 O'erwhelmed us with their spray,
But the flowers along the banks, wife,
 Grew brighter all the way.
Aye, more: fruition follows bloom,
 And filled our cup with joy,
When in our arms the angel placed
 Our blessed, darling boy.

Then once again the angel came;
 A bud of hope was given;
But blasts untimely passing by,
 It faded into heaven.
But God is good, his arm sustained,
 And as the years swept by,

The clouds were transient which obscured
The brightness of our sky.

Oh, wife and mother ! names most dear
In every land and nation,
Oh woman, noblest gift to man,
God's last and best creation:
Her mind embalmed in living truth,
Her heart of love the shrine;
Her ways the ways of pleasantness,
Her mission most divine !

And thou, good wife, of all the throng,
The dearest and the best !
My vow to you I here renew,
And press you to my breast;
And, hand in hand, as up we came,
So down the stream we'll row,
And love shall guide us just the same
As twenty years ago.

THE BRIGHT TO-MORROW.

READ AT A KNIGHT OF HONOR BANQUET.

IN days of old, when warriors bold,
In glory clad went knighting
Through many a land, with prowess grand,
"Fair ladye-loves" delighting,
To be a knight in armor bright,
On gallant charger mounted,
By kings of earth—of nob'lest birth—
The proudest thing was counted.

Though cloistered wall, or castle tall,
May not perchance be needed,

As once, of yore, to keep the door
Of purity unraided;
Yet, in these days, chivalric ways
Take still the same direction;
In honor laid—still love is made
Our mutual protection.

While this we know, the direst foe
That can beset the mortal;
With cunning craft and poisoned shaft
Stands waiting at the portal,
Each courteous Knight with sword of right,
To prove the most deserving,
This maxim yet must not forget,
That knighthood means but serving.

Right well he claims the knightly name,
Who 'gainst the day of trial,
For child, or wife, doth lead a life
Of sturdy self-denial.
Far up the height such gallant knight
On love's great ladder climbing,
Shall as his meed find heav'n indeed,
Each noble act subliming.

With bated breath, men talk of death,
Nor dare to face its danger;
Yet, friends, with you, I think 'tis true,
The spectre is no stranger;
Since day by day along your way
Assessments, oft accruing
For dollars due, or one, or two,
Bespeak his direst doing.

His figures are your studious care;
You figure men's endurance,
And, if the bell rings out a knell,
You figure their insurance.

This is the human side, indeed,
Your interests must be cared for;
Assessments made cannot be paid,
Unless they are prepared for.

Men cannot be unselfish, quite;
"One" is our first great number;
Yet, in the breast, that which is best
Should not be left to slumber.
Still may each knight as he hath might
Uphold each child of sorrow;
While it shall wait some better fate,
That dawneth with the morrow.

The lightnings flash, the thunders crash,
The reckless sailor warning;
Black tempests rail, yet never fails
The sunlight in the morning.
Soon comes the night when earth's rush light
Shall quench its feeble burning;
Yet courage, friend; the night shall end
With sunlight in the morning.

For woman, then, dear brother men—
By all that love hath won her;
For children dear, in this good cheer,
I pledge the "Knights of Honor."
With knightly skill, so may they still
Uphold each child of sorrow;
And be it theirs, through all the years,
To brighten every morrow.

THE STORY OF THE YEARS.

WRITTEN BY REQUEST FOR BEARDSLEY'S HISTORY OF DERBY.

AS one that athirst in a desert, in the maze of some feverish
dream,
May hear, as it were in the distance, the babble of brooklet
and stream,
So, dimly, the voice of the ages, comes rippling along to mine
ears,
As I gaze on the mystical curtain that hideth the vale of the
years;
And I see—or in fact or in fancy—grim shadows but half way
defined,
That crowd on the face of the canvass from a world that is
fading behind.

Lo! I stand 'mid the tombs of my fathers! before me a
vision of green,
With a glory of hill and of mountain, of meadow and river
between;
And the rocks, that are storied, I question for the joys and the
hopes and the fears,
With the scheming and crowning ambitions, that lie in the vale
of the years:—

For the swaddling clothes of the infant, the staff and the
finishing shroud,
And again is the question repeated, "For what shall a mortal
be proud?"
True, we talk of our valleys and hillsides, our fields with their
cities besown;
But where are the deeds for defending the realms that we claim
as our own?

But yester their owners were ploughing the soil where their
ashes now sleep,

And to-morrow shall others be sowing for others to come and
to reap.

From the past we but borrow the present; for the future we
hold it in trust,

While for us, at the last, there remaineth, at best, but a hand-
ful of dust.

And so, as I muse in the darkness, a hand on the dial
appears,

And slowly uprises the curtain that hideth the vale of the
years;

And from out of the world of the present, with eyes that are
dewy and blind,

I turn to the shadows in waiting from a world that is fading
behind.

II.

And quick, with a yell of defiance—a flourish of hatchet and
knife,

A horde of wild demons are writhing in the wage of a terrible
strife;

From the hedges of willow and alder, like panthers they spring
on the foe;—

From the shelter of rock and of thicket their flint-headed
arrows they throw,

Till the sun goeth down on the battle, and the war-field is
reddened with gore,

And the squaw and pappoose are bewailing the hunter that
cometh no more.

The vanquished steal off in the shadows, to the depths of the
forest away,

With a scowl of defiance and warning for the deeds of a luckier
day;

While the victors, with scalp-lock and trophy of hatchet and
arrow and bow,

Prepare for a savage thanksgiving for the valor that conquered
the foe.

The faggots are brought and are lighted, the sacrifice bound to
the stake,
And the shrieks of the victim and victor, the depths of the
forest awake.

On the banks of the Paugassuck buried, in the sand of the
Pootatuck shore,
Is the skull and the arm and the arrow, but they startle with
terror no more;
For the arrow is broken and wasted; the bow-string is severed
in twain;
And the smoke of the war dance upcurleth no more from the
forest or plain.

III.

Along through the highlands and lowlands, 'neath the shadows
of forest and rock,
With its blue eye uplifted to heaven, flow the waters of fair
Pootatuck—
Now sending its tide to the northward, now whirling it back to
the sea,
Now curling to sleep in the eddies 'neath the arms of some
sheltering tree.
The eagle looks down on its beauty from its perch on the
loftiest bough,
And the seagull—pray, which is the shadow, the bird that's
above or below?

Lo! turning the rocks at the narrows, the sail of a pilgrim
appears,—
A step in the wonderful progress to follow in line of the
years!
The pioneers, whetting their axes, spring ashore and at once
on the plains
The wigwam gives place to the cabin, as the brute to the
empire of brains.

One by one are the chimneys uplifted; the smoke of the fire-
side upcurls

Through the forests of green, like an incense, as the banner
of progress unfurls,
Till the voice of the genius of labor, like an anthem is heard
in the land,
And the young feet of commerce are planted on the marge of
the Pootatuck strand.

The years sweep along in their cycles; the soldiers fall out by
the way;
But a thousand step into their places for the fight of the ever
to-day.
The back of the toiler is bended to the cross of his wearying
toil
Till he goes, like a tale that is ended, to rest in the covering
soil.

Thus ever it is with thee, as it is with the birth of men,
With the throe and the pang of labor must the struggle of life
begin;
Yet the laborer toward the surface—like the coral beneath the
sea—
Buildeth ever the deep foundations for the temple that is to
be.

In the depths of his inner nature, in the face of his outward
form,
Men partake of their near surroundings—of the sunshine or of
the storm;
Of the mountain or of the valley, of the rocks or the savage
wild,
As the rod of an angry father makes forever an angry child.
So it was with these early pilgrims; they had cowered beneath
the rod
Of a church that was made by statute—which only revered a
God
Of vengeance and retribution; of the eye that must have the
eye;
That spake from the top Sinai, but not upon Calvary.

And so, as from persecution they fled to the western wild,
They prayed, 'mid the howling tempests, to a God that had
 never smiled,
For the sword of the sons of Levi, to smite the heretic crew,
And th' oppressed became the oppressor as the tree of their
 fortune grew.

Though a host of the christian virtues they brought with the
 western wind,
Yet the greatest of these are Charity, and that had they left
 behind,
As useless to fight the forest. Faith never had overthrown
A mountain; and as for Mercy, that belonged to the elect
 alone.

On each side was a daily battle with rock and the thorny fen;
With the wolf and the savage panther, or with still more savage
 men;
Where, then, were the wonder, pray you, that their worship
 was force and fear?
That so little was found to soften, where so little was found to
 cheer.

And yet were they brave and noble; in their manhood, even
 grand;
With errors but scarce remembered, since they came with an
 honest hand
That was daily upon the pages of the well thumb'd law and
 word,
And which—as did read the letter—was the law that the
 conscience heard.

IV.

The woods have come down from the hillside at the sound of
 the woodman's stroke,
And the shipwright hath deftly fashioned the bough of the
 sturdy oak
Yea, and where was the heathen council—the stake with its
 savage rite,

Stands th' church with its heav'nward finger, and th' cot with
its cheerful light.

Where the voice of the sainted Mansfield, through his three
score years and ten,
Tells the tale of the great redemption for the "lost" of the
sons of men;
And the sons of the plough and anvil lift their morning and
evening prayer
To God for His daily bounty and the arm of His daily care.

The rocks, and the service as before time, look down on the
waters sweet
Of the winding and beautiful river; but where are the tripping
feet
Of the swain and his chosen maiden that, of old, from the
village kirk
Hand in hand went into the forest, as the doves went into the
ark?

Gone like the beautiful river, and down to the waiting sea,—
Never, they tell us, returning from their journeyings—he or
she;

Yet they live in their deeds accomplished; in the acres of tardy
soil

Outwrung from the surly forest, by the hand of their sturdy
toil;

Yea, they live in their children's glory; in the fruits of the
rounded hills;

In the beauty of spire and turret; in the clack of the busy
mills;

For the steps in the upward journey that would enter within
the gates

Must forever remain untaken, while the first on the threshold
waits.

V.

Men may talk of deeds of conquest on the land or on the
main,
Yet behind the scene is woman with her hand on the guiding
rein;
So my muse, with pen historic, nevermore forget to bless
Ruth, Naomi, and their daughters—blossoms of the wilder-
ness.

Not a left-hand cypher, surely; whoso either made a bride,
Ever on life's outward journey, found an unit by his side.
Pure of heart, and sweet of purpose, best beloved of sire and
son,
Yet was theirs an endless struggle with the labor "never
done."

Few their wants indeed and simple; once the year a gingham
gown;
Costly silk and mantua makers, luxuries to them unknown;
What if on a Sabbath morning, o'er the meadow's dewy sod
Went the maiden, dainty tripping, even to the house of God,
Ere she donned the precious slipper? Of the two that she
possessed,
Sole of art and sole of nature, nature's work would wear the
best;
What—although the bare suggestion should some modern
maiden shock;—
What if at the church or party, she did wear the linsey frock?
It was hers, her hands had won it! carded, aye, had spun the
wool!
Wove the cloth and made the garment! was not then her
triumph full?
Held she not as high a station—self-reliant, brave and firm—
As some helpless slave of fashion trembling at a mouse or
worm?

There she stands! go bow before her, proud New England's
Mother Queen!

"Naked feet!" Oh well, what matter, feet and hands and
heart are clean!

Linsey dress, and home-made bonnet? pockets, herb and
fennel filled?

Aye, but in the time of trouble she was "herb" and wonder
skilled.

First to give new eyes a greeting, last to catch the fleeting
breath;

First to bring hope's consolation, last to leave the house of
death;

"Naught for self but all for others—" this her motto; doing
good—

This her daily round of practice! hers a life's beatitude.

Children's pride, and manhood's treasure! best beloved of
all, I ween;

There she stands! go bow before her! proud New England's
Mother Queen!

VI.

It is night and, behold! in the valley afar toward the blue of
the sea,

A white mist is rising in flashes over headland of crag and of
tree;

And a sound, as if heavily breathing with lungs that were tire-
less and strong,

Over rocks, through the bushland and wildwood, some monster
were charging along!

Clickety click, clickety click, round the headlands! Is that
thunder which startles our ears?

Or an earthquake which shakes the foundations, as the gleam
of the head-light appears?

Stand aside! for his breath is a whirlwind, and his eye is an
ogre of flame!

And his feet they are shod with the lightnings, which only a
master can tame.

Rings the bell! like a flash we are speeding, as it were, on the
wings of a dream!

Rings the bell! and the earth hath been circled by the genius
of progress and steam!

Rings the bell! and the coach hath departed on the tide of
returnless years,

And the echoing horn of its driver cometh never again to our
ears.

The brooks that for ages have wasted their strength as they
glided along,

In and out through the deeps and the shallows, to the notes of
their rhythmical song,

At the last have awoke to their mission, as their hands they
have placed to the wheel,

And the echoes have mingled their music with the clash of the
hammer and steel.

The castle hath sprung to the hillside, at the touch of the
genii of gold,

And the cottage hath grown in its shadows, like the vine of
the prophet of old:

And the churches that rise on the summit—with the story of
mercy on high,

And their back on the ancient traditions—point an easier road
to the sky.

The old goeth into new bottles, but never the new in the old—
For the world groweth wiser and better, for aye, as the ages
unfold—

E'en the day is at hand when the "doxies" shall hamper no
more or deceive—

When shall men all believe as they worship, and worship
because they believe.

The school-house of old, with its benches of slabs where the
fathers were taught,
Hath grown in the soil of the present to a temple of science
and thought;
And the knight of the rod and the ferrule, for his stipend that
“boarded around,”
Giveth place to the high-toned professor, with a head full of
matters profound.

We miss the old hat in the window, and the writing bench
whereon our name
Was cut with some hieroglyphics, that had put an Egyptian to
shame;
And the “box stove” so guileless of blacking, and the desk in
the midst of the floor,
Where the contraband top and the whistles, were shelved by
the dozen or more.

Through the door comes a fair little maiden, that once in my
boyhood I knew,
And I stop in my story to wonder, if ever that story came
true,
That the Gypsy Queen told her one morning, of a tall man to
come from the sea,
With a ship and a cargo of treasures, for the bride that she
sometime would be.

I think that she half did believe it, for the thought it is child
of the wish:
And how did she know but the ocean for her had that kind
of a fish?
Dear little, brown little maiden,—wherever thy lot hath been
cast—
If thy “ship” hath come in yet, I know not; if nay it will
come at the last,

For the “tall man,” no doubt, was the angel that leads from
mortality forth:
And the sea, was it not forever? and the “treasure”—’twas
not of the earth.

In the old time, 'twas "three months of schooling" and nine
to "gymnast" with the hoe,
Or the axe, or the flail, or the harrow—to plant or to reap, or
to mow.

But in these days our boys go to college as soon as home training will do,
To study for—"batter" or "pitcher," or to paddle some college canoe.

In the old time the girls with their mothers learned to spin,
and to weave and to sew,
Or to send from the throne of the kitchen the roast and the
savory stew;
But in these days they, too, go to college—to Vassar, or Harvard, may be—
To study whatever comes handy, and to take, more or less, of
"degree;"

To talk of the world of dynamics, or the latest Darwinian
doubt,
Or—their word for 't—to be "dying" or "crazy" to know
how that story "came out."
If our boys know too little of labor, it is theirs in the future to
learn
That the seeds that are sown without struggle bring seldom
the noblest return.

And our girls who may dream of a "mission" outside in the
world of to-day,
May find that their mothers, for ages, have not traveled far
out of the way,
In finding their "sphere" at the fireside, in the sweets and
delights of the home,
Leaving man with his rugged nature, in the world of ambition to roam.

Some mistakes there may be to be righted. The pendulum
swings to extremes;

The dew-drop that forms in the darkness, a gem in the orient
gleams;

So, by and by, when we are older, and our "notions" have
softened away,

Our daughters shall shine as the dew-drop in the light of the
orient day,

That cannot be long in the coming;—indeed, there be some
that I know

Already like blossoms of beauty, that sweeten wherever they
go,—

That have come, as it were, on a "mission" to man from some
happier realm;

His equal! yea, more than his equal, the angel that holdeth
the helm;

Pure souls, with whom life is no bubble, to sparkle and break
into tears;

Brave hearts that with face to the sunlight move on through
the vale of the years.

For such, O my brother, be thankful, the gem is more precious
if rare;

But the poorest of all in creation is the soul that has "noth-
ing to wear."

Let our children be taught that an idler is debtor to air and
to soil;

That the glory of man or of woman is the hand that is hard-
ened by toil;

And that who, to his face in the waters, throws the crust of
his worshipping bread,

Findeth never a current returning; and the shadow, it never is
fed.

Though the river a moment flow backward, with forces up-
gathered and strong,

O'er the rocks in its way that impeded, it goes with a shout
and a song!

And so in the stream in the future, I see for our beautiful hills
A history bright with a glory, that the soul of the patriot fills.

For the virtues of old are not buried; the puritan liveth to-day,
But the rock that impeded his nature by the stream hath been
fretted away,

Till the current flows broader and deeper, and the growth of
the reed and the fern

Giveth place on our banks to the blossom,—prophetic of fruit
in its turn—

That shall grow to millennial graces, in the dawn of some hap-
pier morn.



TEMPERANCE.

HE STOOD AT THE BAR.

I.

HE stood at the bar, with a lofty head;
“Rum in mine,” were words he said.

Few his years, and his face was fair,
But he tossed the glass with a jaunty air,

Which plainly said, to the thirsty crew,
“Used to this sort of thing, you know.”

“Rum in mine, is the word,” said he,
“Comrades what shall the tippie be?”

Up from the corners where they sat,
Snoozing under the battered hat,

Shuffled the loafers at the call—
Shuffled the bummers, one and all,

With bleary eye and a drunken “hie!”
And a “damme, my boy, but you’re a brick!”

A bowl of punch, or a “whiskey skin,”
A brandy smash or a glass of gin,

Was freely passed, and they clinked the glass
In a wild carouse, till the morn, alas!

Revealed a corpse—a fiendish band,
A trembling youth, and a bloody hand.

And the click was heard of the jailor's lock,
As they led him in from the prisoner's dock.

II.

He stood at the bar with a bended head;
"Guilty, my lord," were the words he said.

Few his years, and his face was fair,
But he swung like a man, in the morning air,

And he plainly said, as he stretched the line,
"Rum was the tippie, rum in mine."

He stood at the bar of the last appeal,
But the judgment there I may not reveal:

I only know that the Judge of all
Is never at loss where the blow should fall,

And it may be true that the tempter there
Hath far the heaviest load to bear.

THE RED LIGHT DECOY.

THE night was wild. On a stormy lee
A light flashed out, o'er a breaking sea.

Hour after hour, the ship had sped
On aimless wings, through the darkness dread,

With naught behind but an angry wave,
And naught before but a threatened grave.

An hundred hearts sank low with fear,
As they thought of home, and its happy cheer;—

And the prayer went up through the shrouded night
To the Throne above, for a guiding light.

Land ! ho the watchman cried—land ho !—

“The harbor light by its flash I know !”

And the captain's voice rang high and loud
From yard to yard, and from shroud to shroud.

“Port helm ! port helm ! taut haul your sails !
And we'll ride into port on the stoutest gales.”

And now the hearts that had sank with fear,
Beat high with hope, at the words of cheer,—

And again was pressed the friendly hand,
And the loving lip, on the waiting strand.

The light went out:—'twas a foul decoy—
And the ship was caught like a childish toy

In the mad lee tide, and was dashed ashore
‘Mid the tempest's crash, and the breakers' roar.

But hark ! from the shore a gun speaks out,—
A line is sent, and is heard the shout,—

“The life boat, men ! to the wreck, ye brave !
There are lives to save from the hungry wave.”

And the periled crew, by the shoreman's arm
Are saved at last, from the raging storm;—

For none there were, from that open grave,
To spurn the hand that was reached to save.

II.

There's a beacon set on a village hill
With a lurid flame, like the flame of hell !

And it brings a blush to the cheek of night,
As it flames abroad, from the village height !

Up and down on its post genteel
Run spiral lines—like a serpent's trail—

Or the mazy track of a devotee
At the shrine of drink, on a midnight spree.

Fathers, this light is a foul decoy !
Mothers, 'twould ruin your darling boy !—

Paint his cheeks with its fiery flame,—
Spiral his soul with its stripe of shame !—

Palsy his limbs and taint his breath;—
Crush out his manhood, and give him death !

A thousand wrecks are upon its shore,
And it asks that you give it a thousand more.

Who volunteers ? Is it you, friend ? or you ?
That will lead the march of this pit-bound crew,

Into the depths of the death-dark streams,
Back of the place where the red light gleams ?

III.

Lo ! a gibbet built in a christian land !
And a hangman there with a rope in hand !

A victim is wanted ! The doors of a tomb
Are wide for a wretch from the scaffold's doom !

Who volunteers ? is it you, my boy—
You, now the center of hope and joy ?

You, oh youth, with a step like a king,—
Yours shall it be from that beam to swing ?

Who knows ? art sure that a toil-worn wife
Waits not—somewhere—for your rum-thrust knife ?

Art sure that a child of your love, for bread,
May not starve that th' red light flame be fed ?

There are souls like yours to be steeped in crime,
And scaffold steps that their feet must climb,

With waiting crowds, whose wild, brute cheers
Ring loud and high ! Boys, who volunteers ?

Hand up your names ! Sixty thousand brave
Is th' quota each year for the drunkard's grave !

Every name counts one; give us yours, my lad !
Though the angels weep, and the pit is glad.

What shall forbid—while yet shall stand
These red false lights in a Christian land ?

Stronger art thou, my friend, to hold
Thy soul unstained than the hosts of old,

That died as the fool, in the pit of woe ?
Be not deceived ! Life's paths are few

Where danger lurks not; where th' rum blood hound
On the track of his prey, is not close to th' ground.

IV.

The "need of the hour" is a grip that's bold
On the throat of th' wrong ! To-day, as of old,
Our nettle is grasped by too tender a hold.

'Neath opinion's heel is the serpent's head !
Shall we hold it down with unyielding tread,
Oh, men of to-day, till the thing is dead ?

A battle gained is no victory won
If we hold not th' field: Wrong, under the sun,
Hath a thousand lives where the Right hath one.

It is pluck that we want !—that conscious might
That can speak the word that we *know is right*;

Not counting cost, that with fearless tongue,
Shall right names call what we *know is wrong*.

Manhood we want—unflinching—grand,
That can crush the fiend that despoils our land,—

Nor stop to inquire if a rumseller's pew
Be vacant to-day—or we tap not his shoe.

Let us stand for the right!—though we die in neglect,
We're richer than kings, in our self respect!

There *is* something of wealth, that the “street” does not
quote:—

There are stocks, there are bonds, that may help not our
note,—

Yet, I tell you, my friends, that of value untold,
In the bank of the heart, they are better than gold.

Life is not a bubble, to break on the shore,
Leaving only the space where it sparkled before;—

Eternal, and real! Enough for our hands
It findeth of labor, while mercy demands

Wise heads and true hearts and strong arms to destroy,
The fiend of all fiends, with its red light decoy.

Hark! a signal at sea! There's a ship on the shore!
To the wreck, boys, the wreck! let us man every oar,
And we'll bring in the sin-foundered perishing crew,
And bind them to *Hope* with our *ribbons of blue*.

To the wreck, boys, the wreck! though tempests may howl,
And over the rocks may the mad billows roll;
Where the red beacon flameth, we'll pick up a crew,
And we'll bind them to *Faith*, with our *ribbons of blue*.

To the wreck, boys, the wreck! though pirates abound,
On the shores, in the caves, and the darkness around;
By His arm that is strong, we will rescue the crew,
And we'll bind them to *Love* with our *ribbons of blue*.

Then happy, indeed, when the moment shall come,—
That the Master shall call the harvesters home,
If each be adjudged—as his own to be claimed—
One wreck from the shore where the red light gleamed.

THE HEATHEN AT OUR DOOR.

HARK! ye toilers in the vineyard, gallant soldiers of the
Lord,
For the "coral strands" of India that have buckled on the
sword,
For the saving of the nations; know ye not that here at home
Are the worse than "heathen," bending to the idols that are
dumb?

With our Moses on the mountain, cometh Aaron with his staff,
And the fires of human folly turneth out the golden calf;
And the plague is on the people, even as it was of old,
When Jehovah spoke his vengeance on the worshippers of
gold.

There's a voice as 'twere of battle, of the fiends that over-
come;
And with fiery indignation at the mastery of rum
Comes the prophet from the mountain, crying, "Who is for the
Lord!"

With the gallant sons of Levi, let him buckle on his sword.

And beneath the scowling arches of the heathen temple low,
Let him wrest the naked victim from the clutches of the foe;
And with pure and holy banners, as the outward portals
swing,
Let him lead the march of triumph to the kingdom of the
King.

In the valley of Gehenna, even at the city gates,
Lo! a worm that never dieth, for the evil doer waits;
And a fire that never quenches shineth steady from within,
Where the red light beacon pilots to the furnaces of sin!

Nay, we need not go to India for a sacrificial fire,
While the christian wife or widow is forever on the pyre;

Nor for mission works of mercy to the plains of Hindostan,
While the Juggernaut of Whiskey crushes worse than heathen
men.

If the heathen buildeth temples in the semblances of men,
So the christian buildeth temples with their semblances
within;

And the priest *before* the idol, and priest *within* the shrine,
Each, maybe, hath equal favor in the sight of the Divine,
For, who sinneth against knowledge, wheresoever be the
clime,
Must be judged the real sinner, since the motive is the crime.

Shorten, then, the line of vision! level down the object
glass!

Ye are firing over armies that are lurking in the grass;
By their serpentine approaches, that are at your very feet,
Underneath the city's shadow, and are pounding at the gate!

Shorten up the line of battle! If a dollar ye would score
For the "heathen," better write it on a neighbor's cellar
door,

Than to send a hat and feathers, or some beads upon a
string,
For the full completed toilette of some Fejee Island king.

Closer draw the line of action! 'mong the whiskey-ridden
poor,
Where the hunger fiend is gnawing within hailing of our
door;

Though we labor from the rising to the setting of the sun,
Life is not so long, my brother, that the work will all be done.

Though it figure not so grandly in the "Herald" or
"Gazette,"

As so many dollars, maybe, for this mission, or for that,
Yet our gifts will all be numbered and will to His notice
come,

Who has taught us a beginning of our charity at home.

By the light, then, of the Gospel, let it evermore be seen,
 That the inside of our "platter" of christianity be clean;
 Then to whiskey-hating Brahma, or Mahomet, we may say,
 Come you hither, oh, my brother, for behold! a better way.

AFTER THE DEBAUCH.

ASLEEP by the wayside! The night hath been long,
 Vile was the revel—yet viler the song;
 Do not disturb her,—poor waif of the dust:—
 Christ! that her sleep were the sleep of the just!

Oh, it is sorrowful! she is not old,—
 Yet, is the silver usurping the gold!
 Where, in their purity, lillies have shone,
 Sin, with its shadow, hath marked her its own.

Haste not the waking:—too soon it will come;
 Hist! she is dreaming of childhood and home;
 The woods and the meadows,—of brooklets and flowers,—
 Ghosts of the vanished, but innocent hours.

"Mother," she whispers. Oh, God! that the name
 Might burn on the lips of the daughter of shame
 Till the soul, that is shrined in its temple within,
 Should purge to its depths from the burthen of sin.

Asleep by the wayside! Thou soul of the world,
 Take up the stone, if thou wilt, to be hurled;—
 Yet, under the law of the pure Nazarene,—
 First let the hand that would hurl it be clean.

Asleep by the wayside! Oh daughter of shame,
 Who but thy Maker shall measure the blame?
 Soiled and bestained by the shadows of night,
 Once were thy garments as pure as the light!

Proud of thine honor, and proud of thy birth;
Pride of the hearts that encircled the hearth;
Wealth was thy portion, and beauty was thine,
Fashion bent to thee, and thought thee divine.

Prone, by the wayside, in squalor and dirt;
Fashion sweeps by, with a gathering skirt,
And a shudder of fright—lest it see, by the way,
Itself, but too plain, in this mirror of clay.

The roses are fading; the lilies have come;
The eyelids are sealing; the thin lips are dumb;
Only one word—'tis of him that betrayed,
And dead by the wayside the harlot is laid.

Dead by the wayside! the night will be long,
Wake her ye cannot with revel or song;
Bear a hand tenderly—take her away;
None but her Maker shall judge her to-day.

Set the white headstone; yet, spare her the name;
Chisel no word that shall tell of the shame!
Finger of charity, write on the stone
"She was but too human,"—and leave her alone.

* * * * *

Despised by the wayside the harlot is found,
While the maker of harlots is feted and crowned;
Thus ever it is that our lashes are swung
At the back of the victim, and not at the wrong.

SHALL WE LICENSE IT?

LICENSE it? Yes! when the torch and the flame,
 On the wings of the statute are sent through the land!—
 When the den of the thief, and the brothel of shame,
 Are down in the deed that is under our hand.

License? Oh yes, with permission to kill
 With pistol or bludgeon, as well as by gin!
 Aye more, if you please, e'en the demon of hell
 Go charter, by statute, to peddle his sin.

License it? "Yes!" say the men of our time:—
 "It will help out our tax—our account at the bank."
 Fools! know you not that condoning a crime,
 Putteth him that condones in the criminal rank?

Will it lesson your taxes to nurture the knaves
 That live but to rob, and to burn, and destroy?
 Can your "license" offset for the filling of graves—
 For the rape of the heart of some darlingest joy?

License it? No! cries the wretch in the grip
 Of the terrible noose of the tightening rope!

License it? No! cries the murderer "Chip"
 From the depths of a cell that hath never a hope.

License it? No! shout the children of want:—

No! say the wisest, the noblest and best;
 Prohibit! Prohibit! nor say that you "can't:"
 Crush out the viper and break up his nest.

Oh, for the love that we bear to our own—

The God that hath made us:—our country and kin;
 Let us stand for the right—though we stand up alone—
 That our skirts may be free from the taint of the sin.

Men! it is ours but to stir up the sod;—

Ours that the seed shall be carefully sown;
 If the harvest delay, lo! the Master is God!
 Shall He not then reap as He will of his own?

ONLY.

IT was "only" a match, a splinter of pine;—
Harmless enough in itself if you please;—
A handful of shavings cut thinly and fine,
But where could be harm in such trifles as these?

It was "only" a drunkard that lighted the match
And the shavings, that kindled a city to flame!
It was "only" a bolt, but it shackled the wretch,
And held him for life to a prison of shame.

It was "only" a leaf in the stream, as it flowed,
That turned it from peace to the turbulent way;
It was "only" a step at the fork of the road,
And youth was a wreck in the darkness astray.

It was "only" a drop from the lethean spring,
That sparkled and gleamed in the depths of the bowl;—
A sweet little drop, but it covered a sting,
That pierced to the depths of an innocent soul.

A drop, boys, a drop! and a seed hath been sown—
Like the upas, ere long that shall spring upon high!
A drop, boys, a drop! and the curse is thine own;
Drink, drink, if you will, till the goblet be dry.

But charge not the folly to God or to "fate!"
No child ever took as a gift from His hand,—
The loving All Father—this besom of hate,
That burns and consumes and destroys in the land!

Shake up the glass, till the demon within,
Is white with the venom that comes to the top;
A drop, boy, a drop! it will do to begin;—
But remember, the gallows hath also a "drop."

MUSINGS.

A REVERIE.

I AM walking 'mid the darkness, overshadowed
By the gloom;
Close beside me is the cradle—just before me
Is the tomb;
Here and there some favorite phantom, leading
With alluring ray;
Here and there some idol, broken, lying
Prone upon the way.
Evermore the human standeth at the
Temple's inner shrine,
Searching, 'mid the dust and darkness,
For some trace of the divine.

What am I, and whence my coming? Who shall
Tell me? Like a God
I command the winged lightnings—yet am
Counted but a clod!
I can hold the whirling planets, as it were,
Within my hand;
Give them weight and law and measure,—
E'en their substance understand!
I can trace the mighty orbits of the comets
As they pass;
But I cannot tell the secrets of a tiny
Blade of grass!

I can bind the earth in irons! and upon
The wings of steam
I can send the mighty forests whirling past
Me like a dream!
On the cable tongue of ocean I can
Breathe the message forth,
And a fleeting hour hath told it to the
Nations of the earth!
E'en at my command the thunder writes
Its name upon a scroll,
Yet, appalled I stand, and speechless fore
This myst'ry of the soul!

Thus, I walk amid the darkness, hung'ring,
Thirsting for the light,
Though the sages tell me plainly, "never
More shall end the night!"
That, "the soul goes sweeping downward on
The train of mortal breath,
Till at last it plunges madly in the
Deep abyss of death!"
"Man is but"—so say the sages—"atoms
Grouping"—so and so;
Only this—no more forever. Fellow
Traveller, is it true?

Far above the clouds and darkness, lo!
The azure depths expand,
Till I stand in conscious selfhood close
Upon some border land;
Where the pulse of the Eternal throbs
Upon the pregnant air!
And I hear the sounding anthems that
Forever echo there.

What am I? again I question—clod of
Earth? or spark divine?
Death, art thou indeed my master? or at
Last shall I be thine?

Hark! from o'er the mystic border, "I am
 God!" thus answers He,
 "And I the Life!" ye are my children; I in
 You and you in Me!"

Still, I walk amid the darkness, yet by
 Faith I boldly tread,
 Fearing nothing, asking nothing, so that
 I am safely led.
 Thou, "the Life?" Oh, loving Father, then I
 Cling to Thee alone!
 And I'll trust death's lifting shadows
 To reveal the great unknown.

MY CREED.

IF you call me unbeliever and proclaim me in the wrong,
 I may grant you, yet shall tell you, that my unbelieving
 song,

Only asks the right to reason of the soundness of the bark,
 And the knowledge of its pilot, ere we sail into the dark.

I shall answer, I shall tell you, unbeliever if I am,
 That I only seek to battle with the shoddy and the sham;
 If I tear the gaudy roses from the harlot's cheek away,
 It is that the unsuspecting nevermore be led astray.

I shall answer, and shall tell you that there yet may be a
 doubt,

If I'm quite the unbeliever that you fain would make me out:—
 For I hold to all that's noble, all that's gentle, all that's good;—
 God and angels—Love's evangel, and one common brother-
 hood.

I believe in gentle living,—tender dealing with our kind,—
 Holding all men in communion though to idols they be joined;

That, until shall lift the shadows that enshroud our mortal
eyes,

We should never judge the motive that behind the action lies.

I believe in earnest labor for salvation: faith alone

Only sends us empty handed up before the harvest throne—

Like a horde of beggars crying—"sheaves we have not, Lord,
but see !

In our hands are our credentials, showing how we trusted
thee !"

Better, far, with manly spirit, take one single grain of wheat—

Gained by earnest, honest labor—and go lay it at His feet,

Saying, Lord, it is as nothing and we would that it were more—

Yet the field—but, Lord, thou knowest of the harvest that it
bore.

I believe—and who gainsays it ?—that one Father guideth all,

So that whomsoe'er he holdeth, in the end can never fall:

For His hand were but as human could it save not if it would;

And below, indeed, the human if it would not if it could.

Adam's sin—the blood atonement:—endless fire for sinful
man !

On the throne a God of vengeance—take them, brother, if you
can:

But for me—and for me only—I must raise the candid doubt,

Whether here and there a dogma must not soon be stepping
out ?

For the ages level upward, step by step, and stage by stage:—

Each capstone a new departure for some higher building age !

Yet however high uprising, still the temple cannot stand,

If it be not firmly anchored to the rock beneath the sand.

Lo ! the midnight tempest cometh and the builders, with
alarm,

Hear the voice of many waters—see the arrows of the storm.

Yet, unharmed, the fabric standeth in the purple morning
grand,

If unto the rock of ages it be anchored 'neath the sand.

So I answer, and I tell you, that there yet may be a doubt
If I'm quite the "unbeliever" that you fain would make me
out:—

Since I hold to all that's gentle, all that's noble, all that's
good;—

God and angels,—Love's Evangels, and one common brother-
hood.

YE ARE THE REAPERS.

NOW hark ye in hall and in palace,
And hark ye the cottage within,
To the voice of wild mirth o'er the chalice
Of revelry, riot and sin.

The altars of friendship are broken,
The hearthstone deserted and cold,
And the last sad adieu has been spoken
To friends that too soon have grown old.

The eye of proud genius is blighted
At the touch of the wine spirit's breath,
And the heart which affection once lighted
Lies cold in the chamber of death.

From hearts which lie wounded and bleeding,
From lips that are pallid with grief,
The sad voice of anguish is pleading
With heaven for speedy relief.

Now hark ye who dwell in the valley,
And hark ye who dwell on the hill!
From this darkness and bondage to rally,
Ye have power, if ye have but the will.

By all, then, that's holy in heaven—
By all that ye cherish on earth—

Rest not till the spoiler is driven
Forever from altar and hearth.

Say not that ye "are not the keepers"
Of those who would riot in sin;
They're the harvest and ye are the reapers,
Go toil till ye've gathered it in.

UNDER THE SHADOW.

I.

WHO knoweth the time of His coming to close up the
final account?

When the pitcher shall break at the cistern, and the waters
shall fail at the fount?

Come forth with your rods of divining, oh men that in
magic are great,

And read me the mystical signet that gleams on the finger of
fate.

I stand at the graves of my kinsmen, with bowed and with
reverent head,

And I ask of the what and the whither, and of destiny, where
doth it lead?

I pray to the skies for a whisper of things that are yet to
come,

And pleading I kneel at the altar, but the altar and skies are
dumb.

I turn to the ages for wisdom, and question their wonderful
faith,

For aught that shall prove to my reason, that death can be
other than death.

I look, and from out of the mountain of glory, with tablet in
hand,

Cometh Moses, with only the promise of "life" to be "long in
the land!"

II.

A million of paths lie open that lead to the covering sod;
But who, from beyond, are returners, to tell of the valleys
trod?

With the spade and the shroud—like the billow that breaks on
the sounding shore,
Hath the pulse and the throb of our living been silenced for-
evermore?

In moments of pious devotion, we sit ourselves down at the
feast

And partake of the bread of the altar, at the hands of the
chanting priest;

And how shall a flock be fattened, we ask, upon hills unseen?
Or drink of but fabled waters? And what do the shepherds
mean?

I hear of a “loving kindness” that sendeth the frost and
snow,

For chilling and killing the roses, while leaving the weeds to
grow!

And they say that from out of the heavens is ordered the
sparrows fall,

Though I read that the falling is noted—simply noted, and
that is all.

It may be that our hairs are numbered, as are numbered our
earthly years;

But the one may be whitened with sorrow, as the other may
flow with tears,

Because, through the “sin of the fathers,” some statute was
broken of yore,—

As the fruit may be dropped from the branches, by a worm
that was bred at the core.

III.

Two maidens beloved and loving; of kindred the hope and
the pride,

In a ship that was called the "Forever" went out on the ebbing tide.

Their work it was left unfinished, as if they might soon be back;

But, alas! for the ship and the maidens there was never returning track!

It is easy to talk about mercy, and say, "it were better so;"

That "God hath but rescued His darlings from ills of the earth below."

But when hath the burial ended, and the neighbors return to their own,

And we sit ourselves down in the shadows, to desolate thoughts alone,—

We ask if it standeth to reason that God hath so puny an arm

That He cannot protect, as He willeth, from ills that may threaten to harm?

If we send out a child on a journey, we say, and comes danger about,

We crush not the child, but the evil, if our arm be sufficiently stout.

In the mystical land of the Indies, with their idols of wood and stone,

That hover and swarm by the roadside, and never the truth is known;

What wonder, if blindly groping, the child of neglect should fall?

And what, with the light upon us, if our falling be worst of all?

The "light!" But to one it is darkness—perhaps from the blinding dust;

To another, a glimmer of faintness through the glass or of hope or trust.

The "light!" But who orders the shadows that shutteth the
glory out?—

That bindeth us down to the bondage of darkness, and fear,
and doubt?

I would not blaspheme; yet I wonder if all that the Infinite
knew

For the good of His child, and to bless it, He spake to that
barbarous Jew?

Was there never a truth to be spoken, too profound for that
primitive day?

To the heart and the brain of the present, hath the Infinite
nothing to say?

IV.

I said, for the ship and the maidens, there was never returning
track;

But I spake as from out of the shadow of sorrow, and deep
and black!

In the fact of a world beyond us, my faith has been sorely
tried,

While of that which was round about me, I saw but the darker
side.

It may be that I doubted wisely! That the gates from the
mortal swing,

At the last, into shadows eternal, where death is forever the
king!

But what if a world of the living, unseen,—as in days of
yore,—

May surround, but to enter and bless us, if only the open
door!

I have heard, from a child, the story of angels that once were
sent

On a mission of love, and of mercy, to the door of an ancient
tent;

If a fact I know not, or if fancy. But this I must hold to be
true,
That an angel may come to the christian, if ever one came to
the Jew.
For, when was that highway abandoned, on which did the
charriot roll,
Which bore off the prophet, and brought him, again, from the
land of soul,
To stand on the mountain of glory, with Moses and Him that
was slain?
And where is the law to prohibit or hinder his coming again?
Though we may not, as yet, behold it,—the sea, with the crest
of its wave,
Shall batter the cliff into fragments, that bars out the light
from the grave;
And then shall we know that our “lost” ones have triumphed
o’er death and its sting!
And again shall we know, as we knew them, in the kingdom
where dwelleth the king.

THE UNKNOWN DEAD.

I.

I SIT within my chamber wall;—
The evening shadows slowly fall,
And, stretching eastward, to my door,
Invade at last my chamber floor.

While outward gazing to the sky,
A phantom troop goes sweeping by
With screaming fife and rolling drum,
And flashing steel and waving plume,
While from the shadows, overhead,
A voice proclaims, “The unknown dead.”

'Tis not for me that stood aloof
Beneath my well protected roof,
To judge of him that, leaving all,
Could hasten at his country's call,
To peril, with heroic zeal,
His own best good for common weal !

'Tis not, indeed, for me to weigh
In scales of this our later day,
An impulse that could dare the grave,
To break the shackle of a slave !

How men for kith or kin may die;
For conscience e'en the stake defy;
Or can the blazing cannon face,
For triumph of his clan or race;—
In measure, this I understand;—
And yet, to lift a mailed hand
For him that hath no other friend !—
To stoop and kiss misfortune's child,
Though for the act by men reviled !
As water flows, bequeathing blood
To seal the bonds of brotherhood !—
All this, in *men*, is more, my friend,
Of God, than I can comprehend.

II.

The water closes, and the stone
That broke the surface, quickly gone,
Leaves naught behind to track or trace
Its journey or its resting place.
Like rolling stones men live, or stay,—
By constant chafing worn away,
Till rounded to some useless form
They join at last their fellow worm;
The future asks, "What have they done?"
And writes above their dust, "Unknown."

But these, for whom I plead to-day,
That sleep beside the traveled way,
That slumber on the battle plain,
Or toss beneath the troubled main;
That rest upon some mountain grand,
Or the swamps of Dixie land,—
Unmarked, although, by memoried stone,
Undecked by flowers, are they “unknown?”
Not so, indeed! Each sunken grave
Holds in embrace, who died to save
A Nation from its crowning shame!
We have the deed—God hath the name.

Unknown? Not while yon starry fold
That shines to-day in blue and gold,
Shall lift, as now, from strand to strand,
The proudest flag on sea or land!

Unknown? Not while poor Afric stands,
Full owner of his swarthy hands;
Or dusky parents dare to own
The offspring that is all their own.
Till freedom's light shall dim and fade,
And men again are “chattels” made;
Till human wrongs become the right,
And mental darkness glooms the light;
Till thorns shall spring where truth may tread,
We'll count them not the “unknown dead,”
But, by their glorious pathway trod,
We'll know them—as we know our God—
Whose faithful march, where duty led,
Gave to our land its nameless dead.

III.

Across the dark and bloody track
Of war, there were who traveled back
From battle strife and fierce alarms,
To loving hearts and tender arms,—

That took their dust and laid it down,
To rest beneath some grateful stone,
That evermore shall proudly tell
The story how they fought and fell.

And as, to-day, with tearful pride,
We honor these our glorified—
And so, ourselves—e'en may we prove
Most worthy of that crowning love
Of God and man and home and hearth,
That gave them to the covering earth.
Let every flower be fresh with dew,
And every heart beat strong and true;
And every hand be quick to save
From harm this kingdom of the brave!

THE OLD FOLKS TALK IT OVER.

I WENT around this morning, John, to see your "model"
church,

The bell had just stopped tolling as I stepped within the
porch;

Up through the massive outer doors, irreverent and gay,
Came surging in a giddy throng, as 'twere some gala day.

The church, itself, was very grand, with broad and showy
aisle,

And gilded dome, and turrets high, cathedral like in style;

As if had been an effort to astonish heavenly eyes,

And bring, for human greatness, down a plaudit from the
skies!

I stood awhile in silence, upon humble, waiting feet,

Expecting to be welcomed, and invited to a seat;

Not up among the highest, John—I am not proud, you know,

But somewhere near the middle, where the common people go.

I thought, by what you told me, John, that these were christian folk;

So, quite, in a respectful way, I to the sexton spoke,
Informing of my wishes; but, a-glancing at my gown,
He said, "perhaps I'd better sit a little farther down."

I took the fellow's meaning, but, with never thought of guile;
With reverent step I made my way up through the middle aisle

Until I came well toward the front, to one bright cushioned pew
In which, alone, was Nancy Parr—she that was Pettigrew.

Nancy and me were bosom friends in early days, you know,
So, stepping in, I took a seat. What did the creature do
But—with a sort of frightened look at my old bonnet brown—
Creep close out to the farther end and leave me there alone.

At first I felt a little hurt. But then I thought that she—
That's Nancy—and her husband, John, more fortunate than we,

Had much of gold, and many lands to stimulate their pride;
And so, to think forgivingly, with humbleness, I tried.

Yet, since she felt so crowded like, despite the vacant space,
I thought that I would rise and seek for some more welcome place;

But, at the moment solemnly, the parson rose to pray,
And then to hold the fort, for me was there no other way.

I sat all through the service, John, a mark for curious eyes—
As if such interloping were a subject for surprise;
As if, because my garments were a little out of style,
My presence should be scouted as a something to defile.

Indeed, did I begin to think that had the Holy One
In loosely flowing garments by Judean maidens spun
Have entered, with his fishermen, that modern temple door,
They, too, had been invited to the seatings for the poor.

II.

If angels ever laugh, good wife, it surely must be when
 On silent wings they bend above this world of dying men—
 To find them in a scramble for such baubles as may be
 Out-thrown along the borders of the everlasting sea;
 With pluming self-importance and amid a pigmy crowd,
 To fancy earth a-quaking at their mighty step and proud;
 To write their names "immortal" that upclimb the granite
 scroll,
 While sharpens well the tooth of time for banquet on the
 whole.

But what about the doctrine? Was it founded on the law?
 Did the teacher, from the testaments, the proper lessons draw?
 Was God a God of terror? Did He sit an "awful throne?"
 Or, full of love and kindness, were the erring yet his own?

III.

To say the truth, his doctrine, John (he spake of it as new),
 Was much too loose, and easy like, to meet my humble view;
 I missed that good old-fashioned grip upon the throat of sin,
 By which our sturdy fathers sought eternal life to win.

In short, he made too flowery quite the pathway to be trod;
 Too much about forgiveness, and too little of the rod;
 The while, I could not help it, John, the question came to me:
 If, scarcely, be the righteous saved, where shall the sinner be?

IV.

This is a day of progress, wife. The cars go whirling by
 Where, on the double-saddled nag, went jogging you and I.
 In all that's worth the living for, these troubled scenes among
 Than any that our fathers knew, the years are twice as long.

We used to think that heaven, you know, was far off in the
 sky—

With few to enter at its gate; of hell as very nigh;
 For so it was our fathers taught. But in this latter day,
 Reversal comes, with hell afar, and heaven not far away.

Creation finished—on a throne outside the blue profound,
Our Father sat, from age to age, and watched the wheels go
round,

With naught to do but listen to the high applauding song
Of glory, and hosanna, from the great white-winged throng !

To-day we know Him better—that He is the tireless one;
That forever and forever He is marching, moving on;
With no power that can withhold Him from the conquest over
ill,

Or prevent His love from saving whomsoever that it will.

Behold ! were not all moulded by our Maker's hand the same ?
And was not his own great breath that to each nostril came ?
What if, on upward path, a few an earlier goal have won ?
The others, though at slower gait, may still be climbing on.

V.

All this is very pretty, John, and pleasant to receive;
But God and truth are still the same, whatever men believe.

It may be that in doctrine went the ages all astray;
That ever was construed the word in quite too serious way;
But who is there that knoweth this ? Suppose we go amiss ?
Can we afford to take much risk in matters such as this ?

As I came home from church I thought too many years had
crowned

The heads of such as you and me, to go prospecting round
For pastures full of roses which, however they adorn,
For unprotected feet, like ours, may hide some sharpest thorn.

Besides, when called upon to pass the shining portals through,
What matter if, at last, they prove much wider than we knew ?
By far the greater recompense shall come to our behoof,
If shall be found of room to spare, than if be not enough.

A REVERIE.

SO ends the scene! Earth's short, sharp strife is o'er;
To this dark waiting shore,
One fateful day,

The boatman came, and with his dipping oar
Bore her away

Peace, darling, peace! But thou, O boatman pale,
If thou may'st e'er reveal
Thy journey's end—

Tell us thy secret: whither did'st thou sail
With this our friend?

For if she lives, and something says 'tis true—
Somewhere beyond the blue,
Or far, or near,

She hath not quite forgotten, this I know,
Her darlings here;

And she would send them greeting, it may be,
From o'er the silent sea,—
Their hearts to bless—

Some cheering word; perchance, would send by thee
A mother's kiss.

And we, some loving message back would send,
Pale boatman by thy hand;
That she may know

How lonely is the little household band
Left here below.

But whither shall we seek her—in what land or clime?
Alas! by that grim pantomime
That fits thee well,

I read thy answer, boatman: "Land or clime
I may not tell."

And yet, sometimes, a fleeting smile I trace
Upon thy marble face,
As if it were,

Despite exterior cold, some pitying grace
 Had nestled there;
And, bending low, I strive with hungering ear,
 Some echoing voice to hear,
 From some far shore,
That shall dispel this shuddering, craven fear,
 Forevermore.

In vain—'tis all in vain! I only know
 That one by one we go,
 Boatman, with thee;
We know what is—but all beyond the *now*
 Is mystery.
Well, keep thy secret! I can wait!
 Not far off is the sea;
 And, soon or late,
Thy signal sail shall flash the hour that fate
 Shall toll for me.

And as a child, aweared of its play,
 On some fair summer day,
 Lies down to sleep—
So, leaving all earth's troubles by the way,
 I, too, may sleep;
Yet shall I wake! and as I reach the strand
 Of that fair promised land
 Across the sea,
I have a faith, that one with outstretched hand,
 Will welcome me.

And with such harvest, as I well can glean
 From barren field and plain,
 I'll step ashore;
And, taking up life's broken thread again,
 Go on forevermore.
Forevermore? Ah, who can comprehend
 Beginnings without end—
 A stream without a sea?

No matter, it must be, since all things upward tend
To immortality.

The outer ill decays, the inner good survives—
In newer form, maybe,
Yet still survives.

In all things else, God levels to upbuild—shall He
Except these human lives?

* * * * *

Then fare thee well, beloved; where the tall dead grasses
wave,
We have given up thy ashes to the silence of the grave;
But we know 'twas but thy ashes, that thy spirit, taking
wing,
Found a home of peace and beauty in the kingdom of the
King.

Soon the snow-blast of the winter, shall a fleecy blanket
spread,
Setting up its ghostly statues all about thy narrow bed;
And again, the timid snowdrop shall precede the coming
spring,
But there's neither snow, or snowdrop, in the kingdom of the
King.

Then peace to thee, beloved; and when the years shall ring
The knell that brings me knocking at the portals of the
King,
Wilt thou promise, oh, my darling, that with *him who went
before*,
Thou wilt stand for me as voucher at the golden palace door:

Tell the warder that "A pilgrim, travel-worn and very late,
Poor and needy, blind and helpless, knocketh at the outer
gate;
Not for merit, or for labor, is there aught for him to claim,
Save for love unto his neighbor, (and he says it to his shame);

But the clogs that did outweigh him, doth no longer to him
cling;

All he asketh now is labor in the service of the King."

And if the gates are opened so that I may enter in,
All the past will be as nothing to the life that shall begin;
Not a life of selfish pleasure; not a life of lazy bliss;
But a life, except in measure, much the counterpart of this;
Where each thought for God and duty shall a rich fruition
bring,

As we live, and love forever, in the kingdom of the King.

IN THE COTTAGE BESIDE THE SEA.

I.

ON the banks of the blue Potomac, in the marsh of its
sunken shore,

The foe was intrenched, while his legions invested the White
House door.

Creeping through crack and crevice—on the midnight's
poisoned breath,

The chill and the burning fever went in to the work of death.

Lo! the hero upon his pallet! a world by his wounded side,
Waiting—how tearfully waiting—a turn in the outward tide;
Oh! but the terrible pity that manhood so sweet and grand
Should lie in such deadly peril, by the act of so mean a hand!

Christ! that Thy tender kindness had not warded the ruffian
ball!

God! that Thy "providences" should have suffered this
"sparrow's fall."

Nay, but we must not question. Who ruleth so well as He
That led in the days of darkness, through another and deeper
sea?

II.

"All quiet along the Potomac," the bulletins daily cry,
And daily the quickened pulses to the bulletins give the lie!
Daily the courage mounteth the wings of a hopefulnss,
But to sink with the evening shadows to a deeper yet abyss.

All quiet along the Potomac! save only the careful tread,
Of sorrowing ones that followed the path that the hero led;
Or the voice of the steed in waiting the suffering one to bear
To a region of hope and promise, from the gates of a grim
despair.

III.

Up from the blue Potomac! Up from its sunken shore,
Death, on his phantom charger rallies his pallid corps;
Ho! but the victim fleeth! follow him, Fever and Chill!
Follow him, oh malaria, mother of many an ill!

Down goes the throttle lever! Ready now, clear the track!
Wheels of the great world's traffic, stand for the moment
back!

Hand on the rein that guideth, steady now, hold with care!
When did an iron charger so precious a burthen bear?

Wide goes the iron throttle! and with giants quickened
breath,

Proclaimeth a stern defiance to the grim pursuer death!

"Let her go!" and the wakened forests have joined in a
mighty strife,

And a mile to the whirling minute is the race for a human
life!

On, on, without stop or turning, o'er the farms of "My Mary-
land!"

On, and on to the Susquehanna—neck and neck to the waiting
strand—

Went the steed and its grim pursuer where, alas! must the
struggle be

Yet renewed for the final triumph, in the Cottage that's by the
Sea.

IV.

All is quiet along the Potomac; for the bulletin at the gate,
With the words of its studied blindness, no more do the people
wait;

With their shadow upon their portals, and their fear of the yet
to be,

They turn with a yearning vision to the Cottage beside the
Sea.

And so, all our great land over, we turn from the wond'rous
tale

Of the race of the iron giant, with the steed of the rider
pale;—

And we sigh for our plucky hero; and we pray that there yet
may be,

Victory—waiting victory, for him, by the sounding sea.

Come to him, O ye breezes! with the balm of a thousand
isles;

Temper, O skies, to his weakness, the heat of thy ardent
smiles;

Soothe him to rest, Great Ocean!—God of the brave and free,
Come, with Thy grace of healing, to the Cot that is by the
Sea.

V.

And yet, though we bend in sadness, how, greater than kingly
crown,

Must the love of a loyal people be to him that is stricken
down!—

To know that for him the forces of science are all in play!

That gold is poured out unstinted! that faction is swept away!

That a nation of fifty millions—aye, more, that a world doth
bend,

At the throne of the great Eternal, for a stay of the spoiler's
hand!

And this, for a simple “boatman!” And where doth the
secret lie?”

And whom shall we count more happy, however, or when he
die?

LOWERING THE STANDARD.

MUST the church be kept, then, above the world
Too high for a common sinner's reach?
Is this the banner that Christ unfurled?
Is this the doctrine He bid you preach?

Did He bid you stand on some rocky height,
And hurl your thunders on all below
Who see not truth in your partial light,
Yet who are hungering truth to know?

Didst never hear? Oh, saint and priest—
So free thyself from the taint of sin—
Didst never hear of that famous feast,
Where the halt and the blind were taken in?

It may be, neighbor, that wondrous light
Hath blinded thine eye—sometimes it will—
To the truth, forever, that martyred Right
In humble garb hath upclimbed the hill,
To be mocked and buffeted by the crowd
Whose ears are sealed, but whose tongue is free
To spit contempt from their spirits proud
At the son of God that is on the tree!

Down! Get thee down from thy lofty perch—
Down to the level of common men!—
Down to our human hearts, thou church,
Nor ban the ninety to save the ten!

How dost know that thy words are true:—
How dost know but in future time,
But to open thy doors to a harnessed few
Will be held, as it is, but a monstrous crime?

Where is that doctrine the fathers held—
The infant roast in the region dire?
Dead! by the progress that hath dispelled
The literal pit, with its literal fire!

Ah, do we not know how some men live
 Whose prayers are lengthy—that make pretence?
 That carefully figure, before they give,
 With profit and loss, the whole expense?

 And—leaving their honesty in their pews—
 Go sallying forth upon the street
 To balance accounts; from honest dues
 Their neighbor to “higgle” and strive to “beat.”

 Nay, my indictment is not for all;
 Grand souls thou hast in thy fold, O church!
 Who make no boast, yet whose footsteps fall
 With grace and fitness within thy porch:

 Who hold thee not—as above the world—
 Too high for a common sinner’s reach;
 Yet—under the banner that Christ unfurled—
 Hold not to the creed that the bigots teach.

“WHAT WINS?”

I.

But what is the “victory” worth, my friend?
 Will it profit you thus to chain
 Your feet to the wheel of ambition, or stand
 At the counter with shackled brain,
 Till the soul cries out with pain?

 For what is the goal of this feverish race?
 Is it wealth that hath wings? Is it fame?
 Lo! the years go by at a merciless pace,
 And the toiler hath found but an humble place,
 ’Neath a stone, with a chiseled name,
 That even the sands of the granite gray—
 Ere they crumble away—

To-morrow shall tell to forgetfulness !
For the curious stranger shall pass that way,
And question, "What manner of man was he,
That lieth so low in the tangled grass?"
But the neighbors shall answer with sad refrain,
"We only know, that with scheming brain,
And a shriveled soul,
He stood at the gateway and gathered toll."

II.

Is it not pitiful? Clinging to earth,
As if with eternity's hold !
One day in the seven to prate of "new birth,"
And six on our knees to the old—
At the shrine of the Moloch of gold !
One single stray thought for the measureless years,
And six for this second of time !
As if our dark valley so watered by tears,
Verged not on a region sublime—
'Neath a fairer and happier clime;
Where the nerve must "relax" from its perilous strain,
And the smile shall unravel the frown;
Where the tyrant of thought must unlimber the brain,
And the slave of ambition shall sunder the chain,
That to selfishness held him down.
Already the eye that but lately was blurred
By the folds of Mortality's veil,
Hath pierced through the gloom, and the bosom is stirred
By the whispers of angels that long to be heard
From their home in the land of the leal.
Then away with this nightmare of ceaseless toil !
This burthen of heart and brain !
This drowning of life in the midnight oil,
In the headlong race for gain !
For what shall it profit who gaineth the earth,
And loseth one joy from his soul ?
Cast the globe at his feet and what is it worth,
But to burthen his way to the goal ?
'Twould not pay the old ferryman's toll !

THE CHURCH OUR FATHERS BUILT.

ONCE within a marble city, where the people, low and still,
Slept in sweet and quiet places, all around a village
hill,
Stood a church of plain proportions, weather-beaten, old and
gray,
With a quaint and rustic steeple, pointing heavenward, by the
way.

Little though was there, in seeming, through the six days of
the week,
Of its work, or of its mission, in its loneliness, to speak,
Yet, upon the holy seventh, to its hospitable door,
As unto a hill of refuge came the weary and the poor.

Unto whom it spake with promise of some region of the
blest,
Where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at
rest;

With the ever sweet "Our Father" teaching mortals how to
pray;

Or, with grand old Coronation, making glad the Sabbath day.

Yet, to fail not bounden duty, as it thought, with warning
breath,

It reminded of the terrors of impending "second death,"
To the mercy seat yet pointing, and to One upon the throne,
That forever and forever keepeth watch upon His own.

Thou shalt keep my Sabbath holy—thou and all within thy
gates;

There it stood in His handwriting, plain upon the granite
plates;—

Heeding they the holy mandate, o'er the early morning sod,
Went the faithful, asking nothing but the favor of their God:

Stopping not to carp at Moses or a questioning to raise
As to methods of creation, or the number of its days;

Knowing this, and this sufficing—from the oak the acorn
bore,

Came, in turn, the oak forever; who is he that knoweth more?

Ah! How well do I remember, as the past comes into view,
How we sat, imprisoned urchins, in the great old fashioned
pew—

Duty's eye upon the preacher, winged thought upon the hills,
With the buttercups and daisies, and the music of the rills.

"Ninthly," "tenthly," stretched the sermon. Would it never-
more be done?

Harder grew the polished benches,—slower ran the moments
on;

Still the preacher wove his logic though whatever 'twas about,
I am sure I cannot tell you, for I could not make it out:

Only this, perhaps, that, somewhere, something dreadful was
in wait,

For whoever failed to enter at some "straight and narrow
gate!"

Fire and brimstone! death eternal! gnashing teeth and crush-
ing woe,—

How the hideous words went seething all my boyish nature
through!

How I wrestled with their meaning, as I thought them o'er and
o'er,

Wond'ring if good, loving fathers cursed their children ever-
more.

Time hath healed the mental anguish, love hath charmed the
curse away,

Yet the tree, so warped and wounded, plainly hath the scar,
to-day.

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On, the train of human progress through the valley thunders
on;

Of the church our fathers builded, there remaineth not a
stone;

Where the headstone, quaintly graven, hailed the stranger,
passing by,

With the warning note of judgment, lifts a temple to the sky.

On its floors are costly carpets, in their splendor rich and
rare—

Overhead, a thousand torches flash their brightness to the
air;

Jewelled cups upon the altar, costly paintings on the wall,
Pride of wealth and pride of station, fashion ruling over all.

Dives sits his velvet cushions, as an oyster, cold and dumb,
On the plate his "margins" placing 'gainst the evil days to
come, .

Leaving to the well paid pulpit with Jehovah terms to make,
Doubtful, after all, hereafter, if he sleep or if he wake.

Fancy Him, that in the mortal "bore the burden of our sin,"
Walking 'neath the gorgeous arches—would the warder let
Him in?

Garments old and coarsely woven, to the Rabbi's bending
low,

Preaching, as he goes, His sermon on the mount of long ago!

"Give to every one that asketh," "Turn the borrower not
away,"

"Feed the hungry," "Clothe the naked," "Debts unto the
farthing pay;"

"Take no thought about thy raiments;" "Preach my gospel,
make it free."

"Give to every one that asketh," "Turn the borrower not
away,"

"Pay thy debts, e'en to the farthing," none of these were for
to-day.

"Something about early rising?" That will do and that is
tried,

With the Marys, for example, at the tomb of the crucified.

Bigots are they? Aye, most likely, bigots in that higher sense,

Which, for holy truth in peril, holdeth life a cheap defence;
Yet, in all their worldly dealings, paying justly what is owed,
Wheresoe'er their footsteps take them you shall pick them
from the crowd.

Take the sneer, oh blatant scoffer! doubt or spurn hope's
proffered boon,

Smite the mountains till they tremble, mock the sun, or bay the
moon!

Yet until the skies shall darken at the shadow of thy frown,
Stands the church our fathers builded and ye cannot sneer it
down.

"Errors?" Yes, from human standpoint—of the mortal, of
the earth,

Yet to whom it bringeth comfort shall we count it little worth?
Founded on the truth of ages—reaching to some bright un-
known,

Stands the church our fathers builded, and ye cannot tear it
down.



CASTLE BUILDING.

THERE would be a childrens' party, so 'twas whispered
round one day,

And the poet must be present with a something sweet to say.

But, the hollow tree and leafless, could it fellowship with
flowers?

Should the evening's closing shadows mingle with the morning
hours?

Snow and frost around me drifting:—hand upon the slowing
rein,—

Thus I asked the warning pulses, can I be a child again?

Then upspake the heart within me, "even till the shadows
fall,
Keep the boyish heart in beating, men are children, after all."

So I burnish up my pictures, and I dream anew the dream,
Of my childhood's pretty castles, somewhere down upon the
stream.

How they lifted in the glory of their turrets to the sky—
How the gates of pearly splendor flashed their brightness to
the eye !

With the hopefulness of boyhood, oh how sanguine was the
dream
Of the castles to be builded, somewhere, down upon the
stream !

I would have a mighty vessel, and a mariner would be—
I would bring the spicy treasures from the islands of the sea.

I would have a pretty palace, and a coachman, and a span—
E'en would fill the world with wonder, when I grew to be a
man !

So I builded and upbuilded, in some evermore to be,
Far adown the rapid river that is running to the sea.

But, my children, I confess it, still, as in my morning dream,
I am planning, I am building farther down upon the stream.

Scarce a stone has yet been planted, more substantial than the
air:

I have sailed no mighty vessels—I have found no treasure
rare;

E'en the palace, and the servants, and the fame that I would
get,
May be somewhere down the river, but I have not seen them
yet.

So I think it fair to tell you, that I've learned upon the way,
As a rule, that castle building, in the end will never pay.

Modest estimates and figures, for some probable to be,
Is by far the best and safest, for us, children—you and me.

NIGHT ON THE BOULEVARD.

THE sun is down in the crimson west;
The shadows up from the eastward creep;
As if with a trouble upon his breast,
Old ocean sobbeth himself to sleep.

Phantomlike surges the airy throng
Through the great pavilions with ebb and flow,
Over the lake comes the boatman's song,
Hither and thither the lanterns glow.

The children's castles along the strand
By the evening billows are swept away;
For the children built but of shifting sand,
As their fathers built—as they build to-day.

Faces of friends that a passing hour
Taught me to cherish as souls akin,
Peep, as it were, through the closing door—
The closing door of the what hath been.

“The what hath been?” Are the by-gones dead?
A joy in the soul can the soul forget?
Not so. For the good that th' past hath had,
To-day and to-morrow are living yet,

In the firmer step; in the better thought;
In the braver heart of this world of men,
The sum of to-morrow were illy wrought,
With no carrying balance from what hath been.

To-morrow, and out from this summer stream,
The pulse and throb of the great hotels,
We shall turn away and our waving hand
Shall answer them back a mute farewell.

A week, or was it a fortnight since
Among these pleasures our lot was cast?
It mattereth not, for though short or long,
The short vacation must end at last—

In the packing trunk, the parting kiss,
The “write to me darling, forget me not;”
And the promise, alas! for our carelessness,
So easily given, so soon forgot.

For such is life, as by magic glass
The pigmy throng on the screen is thrown;
We flash into view and as quickly pass
From sight and into the dim unknown.

Yet, friends, to-morrow with parting song
Though we turn our faces and feet away,
May the cords of friendship prove so strong
As to bring us back on some future day:

To breathe the balm of this healing air—
To bathe in the waters of ocean blue;
From out of the wearying world of care,
Our hearts to strengthen, our souls renew,

In the contemplation of Him that holds
The surging waves in his hollow hand—
To dig with our shovels in sands of gold,
For all that is noble and good and grand.

NEW YEAR'S THOUGHTS.

THE skies are of a leaden hue. The shiv'ring earth below
Seems waiting, from the burthened air, the sifting of the
snow.

The dancers trip the old year out at parlor, rink and hall,
While at the kirk a chosen few are praying for them all.

The clock is on the stroke of twelve. The old steps down and
out.

Forth from the portals of the new—as to a thing of doubt—
I stretch my hand to eighty-five, which enters at the door,
And give—remembering all it was—good bye to eighty-four.

Change rides upon the rapid hour. The seasons come and
go,

There's blooming of the roses, there is drifting of the snow.
We plant and sow and bide our time; yet from the springtide
forth.

What man is he that can foretell the harvest of the earth?

Yet, furrowed brow, and graying lock, though many years
unfold,

What if our life be just as long, despite this “growing old?”
What if, indeed, somewhere beyond, be taken up the thread
Of life, that Time, the weaver, drops in cities of the dead?

II.

Where are the stars, one year ago, that sparkled overhead?
I seek, in vain, for them to-night; have they gone dark and
dead?

Nay; but there is a misty cloud betwixt me and the sky,
Which—swept away—shall reveal their glory to the eye.

Out from our busy village life this eighteen eighty-five,
Full many a cherished friend I miss, no longer yet alive.
E'en as I write, the list grows long, until with heart bereft,
I mark—to nature's rightful claim, how few, how few are left!

Among our honored dead is one, late guardian of our wealth;*
 Another stood with kindly hand, preserver of our health.†
 A third‡—our calm philosopher—to three score years and ten,
 Each, in his way, fit model for a world of younger men.

But these had lived allotted time—were bending to the snow;
 To reach, at best, the final goal, they had not far to go.
 But what of her,§ the bride betrothed, to consort with the worm
 Who went from sight that August day, amid the blinding
 storm?

And what—upon whose closing grave shone bright September's
 sun,

Of her|| who vanished out of life that only had begun?
 The light of home! a parent's joy! the best beloved of all?
 Can He who notes not also save the fledgling sparrow's fall?

These left their work unfinished. From the dim mysterious
 bourne

That lies beyond the shadows, will the maidens not return?
 Gone, like the stars, behind a cloud, who knoweth but, some
 day,

They'll come to us, as come the stars when clears the mists
 away.

III.

What of the morrow? From on high the sun's benignant
 forces,

As from its birth, fall on the earth yet swinging on its courses.
 Last year, as ever had before, the meadows bloomed as
 queenly;

The crops grew well; and for the flocks the hills loomed up
 as greenly;

*Joseph Arnold died April 21st, 1884.

†Dr. Ambrose Beardsley died Oct 30th, 1884.

‡Stephen N. Somers died Dec. 24th, 1884.

§Carrie Smith Sprague died Aug. 28th, 1884.

||Ina Gertrude Peck died Sept. 5th, 1884.

Yet, on the streets, strong, hardy men, the toiler's wage
demanding

To purchase bread, with empty hand, in hungry ranks are
standing.

What if we pray "God help the poor!" though proper quite
to pray it,

For hungry mouths, a peck of meal would many times out-
weigh it;

In yonder city on the hill, a mound but late uprounding,
Contains her dust whose helpful hand was evermore abound-
ing*

In deeds of mercy to the poor; so that, when all was ended,
Upon her grave great loving tears in copious showers descended.

Go ask the poor that she called hers, if any be that doubt it,
With grateful lip and sorrowing heart they'll tell you all
about it:

Of all the clouds she silver lined, of burdens made the lighter,
Of children from her bounty fed, of hearthstones made the
brighter!

Not far away, upon the hill, the pauper dust is sleeping
Of whom in life, with greedy hand, but gathered for the keep-
ing;

A sturdy worshiper of gold, sharp, shrewd and stony-hearted—
Who made rejoicing that he lived, or wept when he departed?

The cold, white slab, with quoted line, his best to make the
most of;

The rounding sod, the shroud, the worm—what else has he to
boast of?

"Go to!" He said, "death endeth all!" so took his stingy
rations,

And lived for self and worldly gain, and died—for his relations.

*Mary Jane Shelton died Dec. 28th, 1884.

Death ends not all; but, if it did, which had the truest living?
 The miser? or, with loving hand who gathered but for giving?
 Who answered well the cynic sneer about that gentle charity,
 Whose left hand knoweth not its right, the sweeter for its
 rarity.

The clock strikes twelve, the year goes out with all its check-
 ered story,

Wind-fallen fruit, and broken toys, yet here and there a glory
 Among the noblest, best of which was this true-hearted woman,
 Who showed the world how much of God may dwell within
 the human!

SAD MOMENTS.

YES, there are moments when this life
 Looks dark to us and dreary;
 When with its toil, turmoil and strife,
 Its darkened paths with sorrow rife,
 The stoutest heart grows weary.

Seen through despondency's magic lens,
 Each hillock grows a mountain;
 But throw aside the glass, and then,
 We boldly onward march, like men,
 Each obstacle surmounting.

For after all, 'tis not so ill—
 This world—as some would make it;
 Though whatsoe'er its cup may fill,
 Its average joy must, largely, still
 Depend on how we take it.

Who looketh o'er the frowning brink
 And trembles at the danger
 Which lies below, his wayward feet
 Are apt to turn the ill to meet
 That else had been a stranger.

Who skyward turns his steady face,
 To right or left unswerving,
 May safely run his daily race,
 Unmindful of each dang'rous place,
 That else had been unnerving.

Full half the burdens that we bear
 Are children of foreboding;
 Dark forms of grim, unreal care,
 Crowd in upon the mental air,
 Our very hearts corroding.

E'en when around us wrapped we find
 The clouds of real sorrow,
 'Twill help us little to repine;
 Far wiser we, to leave behind
 The past, and trust the morrow.



THE YET TO BE.

WHAT, for me, hath proud ambition? I have not the
 soaring wings

That can mount the high empyrean and consort with mighty
 things:—

Of the earth, I am but earthly; yet, forevermore to me,
 There is something calling, calling as of something yet to be.

Deep within my inmost spirit there are voices, sweet and
 clear,

That at times come singing, singing of some glory that is
 near;

And my soul, as in a rapture, catches up the hopeful glee,
 And goes onward calling, calling for that something yet to be.

What it is or whither leading—up or down the steep incline,—
 Till it comes I cannot tell you, for the secret is not mine:

Yet the voices, still the voices,—for that glory to begin,—
Evermore are calling, calling from without and from within.

I have sat beneath the splendor of the starlit evening sky,
With my soul absorbed in wonder at the majesty on high!
Though I could not find expression for the thoughts that in
me lay,

Yet the stars seem calling, calling as if something they would
say.

I have stood beside old ocean, where his landward billows
rolled,

At the sunset, from the westward, through a gateway as of
gold,

And have heard the mighty voices of his never silent waves,
To my spirit calling, calling from his caverns and his caves.

I have seen the tiny snowdrop pushing upward from below,
Pale and breathless, yet courageous, through its prison house
of snow;

Though I failed of comprehending, what its message then
might be,

Yet the snowdrop calling, calling, seemed a messenger to me.

So within my inmost spirit there are voices sweet and clear,
That at times come singing, singing of a glory that is near,
While a thousand whispered echoes from without and from
within,

Evermore are calling, calling for that glory to begin.

Thus I read these pleasant voices, “with an aim at lofty
things,”

Though thou reachest not empyrean, try, at least, thy humble
wings!”

For the snowdrop through the snow-drift, and the starbeam
and the sea,

Evermore are singing, singing of a glory yet to be!

LET US PRAY.

WHAT is prayer but the voicing of weakness,
Weakness that comes from consorting with clay?
What is faith but a trust that in meekness
Holdeth to Him that is leading the way?

The prayer of faith may be strong to the healing
Of whom that hath faith in the power of the prayer.
While there is life, then, why stop our appealing?
Who knows the turn of the tide to despair?

Man is the pleader and God the bestower;
How shall we know when 'tis sinful to pray?
How can we tell when He closes the door,
Turning His face from the pleader away?

Hear that sad voice in Gethsemane's garden;
The son of the Father is sentenced to die!
Doth *He* not *know* He must take up His burden!
Doth He not pray that the "cup" may pass by!

Who that hath traversed this valley of bleakness,
Asking no blessing—acknowledging none:—
Boasting a strength that is only a weakness,
Shun him as one that 'tis safest to shun.

Then let us pray with the morning's caresses—
Pray when the evening o'ershadows the sky—
Pray without ceasing. The answer that blesses,
Least when expected may come from on high.

I have a faith that in regions about us—
Somewhere about us—or near or afar,
Is a realm that were not quite a heav'n without us,
To some one belov'd that is waiting us there.

May it not be that when sorrows beset us,
Half-way—sometimes—we may meet in the air?

They coming down with a message to greet us,
We climbing up on the ladder of prayer?

Aye, let us pray with an earnest emotion—
Not by much speaking, for that may betray;
Pray for the grace of an honest devotion
To God, and our neighbor, and work as we pray.

“Pray for Jerusalem.” Pray for its glory—
E'en for the land of our love and our pride—
That injustice may cease from the page of its story,
For whom hath the martyr and patriot died.

Pray for the nations; but, while at devotion,
Ask of the needs that may lie at our door—
If the “bread” that is cast to the waves of the ocean,
Best were not kept for the heathen ashore.

Down on thy knees, to the earth, oh, my brother,
Plead that who ruleth, forever, will stay
The hand that for gain warreth men with each other;
Then take up the ballot and work as you pray.

So have I faith—though you may not believe it—
So have I faith, and must cling to it still,
To the prayer of the heart, unto whom will receive it,
A blessing may follow, forever, at will.

TRUTH.

YOU may take up your pencil and write
Until black seemeth white, if you will;
But the wrong will be never the right,
Though you whiten with all your skill.

You may hide yourself out from the daylight,
And fancy the sun does not shine;

Though he reach not your cobwebs and gray light,
Above you his rays are divine.

Men may gather in solemn convention,
Vote "nothing new under the sun;"
But while they are trying prevention,
The world has moved grandly on.

O man ! with a spirit immortal,
Whose feet through the valleys have trod;
On the mountain of Truth stands the portal
Which opens the city of God.

"GOD IN HIS PROVIDENCE."

THEY tell me that there is one who numbers each
And every hour—that answers prayer—
That bendeth kindly to His children's call,
Nor letteth one poor weakling sparrow fall
Without His care.

I know not, friend, with you if it may be
Worthy or not a serious thought !
Yet is it true—upon an earnest knee—
That prayer may come, to such as thee and me,
With blessings fraught.

For I have seen, as all indeed may see,
That everywhere, in earth and air,
Sweet, loving influences that there be,
Which, as we ask, in some good fair degree,
May answer prayer.

But, should you ask me if, in this to-day,
That far away yet ever present One
Whom men call "God," will as they chance to pray
Turn back the midday sun,—I only say,
"I have not seen it done."

Despite our teachings it may yet be true,
 That, after all, earth may be quite too small,
 To quite absorb Deific thought, or hold
 The universe enrapt, while it is rolled
 Its journey through.

A comet, from some mighty hand, hath sped
 A thousand years; then reappears
 To tell us of the vast remoteness where,
 Amid majestic worlds of beauty rare,
 Its travels led.

Shall He that rules such destinies on high,
 With anxious eye, bend lowly down,
 To learn, perchance, if it be wet or dry
 On this—to us—however great and grand,
 Small bit of sand?

What sad calumniating this, that holds
 "For purposes His own" that, from the plain,
 God doth withhold the cooling, quenching rain,
 That he may give an hundred sons of toil,
 To Moloch for a spoil!

What logic this that maketh Him descend
 With power almighty to our small events!—
 Yet, for success, must evermore depend,
 Upon some "chast'ning"—to the proposed end,—
 Of some harsh "providence!"

"Yes," but you say, that "once, on Sinai's top,
 He *did* relent!—of evil there repent!—
 Throw down the sword, and at *one* pleading prayer
 The threatened scourge, His guilty children spare!"
 But, did He stop,

Or stay His hand, although, unnumbered prayers,
 Thus, heavenward went—"God save our President?"
 If naught of these prevailed, to future years
 To save this precious life; if all earth's tears
 Unheeded fell,

What hope have I, though I *my* sorrows tell
 On prayerful knees, to every breeze,
 For help divine, *my* troubles to dispel? •
He was a nation's hope! a people's pride!
 And yet—he died!

Who was it said “Ask, and ye *shall* receive?”
 Did we not “ask,” e'en to the last?
 And in this hour of horror, as we grieve,
 Have we the “answer” that—as some believe—
 Was “for the best?”

Who knoweth? Peace, be still! Whatever is,
 In some good sense, may, after all, be right;
 Yet, *for* that right, why plead before *His* throne?
 If God be Lord, and good, will wrong be done?
 Still, let us pray!

E'en as the grass prays to the morning skies,
 With tearful eyes, for kissing beams of light;
 So, let our souls above themselves to rise,
 Cut loose their moorings, and with upward eyes
 Face from this night.

God and the nation lives though heroes die!
 That Garfield was, all manhood may be glad:
 Glad, that this soldier who such marches led,
 Taught me to live to manly purpose high!
 Still better, how to die.

Round his yet open grave, with clasping hand,
 Let us record, O countrymen of mine,
 This *self* resolve, henceforth, that *truth* divine
 Shall, in the councils of this cherished land,
 Forever shine!

For so, our prayers must evermore be crowned
 From the within. What “sparrow” then may fall,
 Or here, or there,—falls but to that profound,
 Unswerving law alike that hedges round,
 And governs all.

DEATH THE REVEALER.

ALL the world over are doubters who crowd to a desolate
 shore,
 With the beak in the heart of the raven, and a croak of the
 "nevermore;"

Who drink but of dead sea waters of bitter unsavory taste,
 While the streams from the mountains of azure unheeded are
 running to waste.

We talk and we chatter of doctrine; but how, to the child of
 breath,
 Shall be proved beyond peradventure of a death that is other
 than death?

Can we hope that will come to the mountain our God with His
 tablets again,
 To reveal of the what and the whither, and the why of our
 being explain?

It were idle to ask it. Forever, since He spake to His prophets
 of old,
 His back hath been turned on His people, and His lips have
 been sealed, we are told.

But what if the scribes are mistaken? and what, after all, if we
 find
 That we cavil and grovel and blunder because we are wilfully
 blind?

* * * * *

Our world is a world of beginnings, from the weak is the birth
 of the strong;
 In the seed is a thought of a morrow, as the egg hath the
 germ of a song.

And where shall be set up the limit? For progression must ever
be room:

Will the love of our Father desert us the moment we enter the
tomb?

Our fathers have told us a story of chariot wheels that roll
On the highways of God, forever, and on to the land of soul;

And, taking it all as a gospel, we say that our forefathers
knew,

Yet we scourge out of court every witness to prove them as
true or untrue!

Else here might I speak as of knowledge to you that so
tenderly mourn,

For a touch of the hand of the vanished; I might speak of the
spirit's return

From the land of eternal living—from the land of eternal
noon;

From a realm that is brighter and better than this that we
call our own;

With a story of glory and splendor—of mountain and valley
and stream—

Of castles whose turrets uplifting in the light of eternity
gleam.

Though they thrill not the air yet the voices of millions on
millions untold,

Proclaim of a grave that is conquered, of a stone from the
tomb that is rolled.

What, then, with such promise before us, for our three score
of years and ten,

If we wrestle for gold and we struggle and strive with our
fellow men?

What then shall it profit, I pray you, when 'tis whispered about
"he is dead,"

If our worldly possessions have dwindled to a mound and a
stone at the head?

It may be that my faith is ill founded,—that the gates of
mortality swing
At the last into shadows eternal, where death is forever the
king;

But, if so, then I pray you to tell me, from whence are the
voices I hear,
As if breaking their way through the silence from a land of
the living anear?

“Somehow,” do you say, “undiscovered, some mystery out of
the sky?”

But why should my senses deceive me, and when was a “law”
but a lie?

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Oh death! with thy splendid revealments, oh grave! with thy
shadowed abyss,

Why start we in fear at thy presence, or shrink from thy proffer
of bliss?

So that shall thy coming be gentle, so that shall be shortened
the way;

Though thy call be to-day or to-morrow, I will ask not reprieve
or delay.

FARTHER LIGHT.

PULPITS do not all the preaching—have not all the gospel
quite;

Seek them, and ten thousand fingers point unto some farther
light.

Shut within some lowly cabin, looking toward the setting sun,
One might think the world, surrounding, bounded by the
horizon:

Yet, of truth, beyond the vision—underneath some farther
sky—

Sunsets turned to morning splendor on the eastern summits
lie.

Truth is but a slow revealer. Destiny hath much to do
With the heart and its perceptions of the right and of the
true.

For, what will be, must be, surely, whether God be far or near,
What we *know* of Him amounteth little to acquirements here.

Though we guess at other guesses,—of the things we think we
know;

Let the bounds for love and mercy measure up the pit of woe.

After all the fact remaineth that who sits upon the throne,
Will interpret as He willeth of His own unto His own.

THE SEALSKIN SACQUE.

ONCE, upon a morning street,
Very pretty, very sweet,
Now and then, with arching eyebrow, o'er her shoulder looking
back,
With a critic eye alert,
For the trailing of her skirt,
I saw a little lady in a sealskin sacque.

Up the Sunday morning street,
Tripped her little busy feet,
All the swifter little maidens, in their passing, looking back,
With a tossing of the head,
As if plainly they had said,
Don't she think that she is "stunning" in that sealskin sacque?

At the ready, open porch
Of a fashionable church,
Soon she entered and, by favor of the sexton at her back,
From a favored point of view,
Just to see what she would do,
I watched this little lady in the sealskin sacque.

To the litany and creed,
To the decalogue, indeed
Unto all did she responsive and so reverent answer back,
That, to give the credit due,
I confess it here to you,
Nothing wrong could I discover in that sealskin sacque.

E'en so far, without a doubt,
Was she fervent and devout,
That I questioned what essential of the christian could she
lack?

For there were, as well I knew,
Cynics not indeed a few
That would scout all such pretensions in a sealskin sacque;

Closely figuring the cost
That would count you but as lost,
All beyond the plain essentials that are worn upon the back;
To simplicity inclined,
That are pretty sure to find,
Some lurking little demon in a sealskin sacque.

And it cannot be denied
That the tendency of pride,—
That which puffeth up unduly the clod above the clod,
Is to handicap the soul
In its journey to the goal,
And to hedge with many dangers the pathway that is trod.

Wherewithal that ye be clad,
Take no thought, was it not said,
By who spake as never mortal spake, some centuries aback?

Lost upon a dreary wold,
 Would the shepherd of the fold,
 Know a lambkin from a goatling in a sealskin sacque?

So I questioned. But I thought
 Of that other doctrine taught—
 “By their fruitage ye shall know them,” set me moralizing
 there;

And I said where is the harm?
 If the heart be true and warm,
 Is an angel less an angel for the garments it may wear!

* * * * *

Up a long and narrow stair,
 In the dim and dismal air
 Of an attic, from the chapel but a block or two away;
 Shiv'ring in the bitter cold—
 Young in years—yet very old—
 Sick and starving, on a pallet a little maiden lay.

“God have mercy!” so she cried,
 “Christ have mercy!” Open wide
 From the threshold, on its hinges swing the attic door aback,
 While from out the outer air,
 Came—in answer to the prayer—
 Closely veiled, our little maiden of the sealskin sacque.

And I saw it proven there,
 That the garments we may wear,
 Of themselves cannot impede us in our journey to the goal,
 If be kept our worldly pride
 All upon the outer side,
 And the “sealskin” of our vaunting be not worn upon the
 soul.

THE OLD TOWN CLOCK.

UNMOVED and calm 'mid the tempests shock,
On the village hill is the old town clock,
Its great round face looking kindly down,
Through the silent hours on the sleeping town—

Tick, tick, tick, tick,—
Watching and guarding the sleeping town.

Many and many an hour have I lain,
Over and over and over again,
Counting the strokes that have told the hour
That hath been, is not, and shall be no more—

One, two, three, four—
That was, is not, and shall be no more.

Right, left, as the pendulum swings,
The christening bell from the steeple rings;
Left, right, and the funeral chime
Hath rounded a cycle of Father Time—

Tick, tick, tick, tick,
Hath rounded a cycle of Father Time.

Who is there that doth comprehend
The moment that cometh to bring the end?
We buy and sell, and we sow and reap,
And the pendulum swingeth to sleep—to sleep!

One, two, three, four—
The pendulum swings to the nevermore.

And yet, and yet—though indeed we stand
On the shining verge of some border land,
Where gold is worthless to purchase peace,
This one refrain findeth no surcease—

Silver and gold—gold, gold,
Till the clock runs down, till the clay is cold

It is all a mistake, poor child of breath,
 To walk the aisles of this court of death,
 As if could never an ending chime
 Re-echo for thee from the clock of time—

One, two, three, four—
 With steady beat from the clock of time.

Pray, who is this with a kingly crown,—
 A courtly train and a haughty frown?
 And who is this with her gems aglow—
 Like drops of sweat from another's brow?

Tick, tick,—one, two,—
 And where is the king and the beauty now?

Mock, spurn as you may the "plebeian crowd"—
 The lowly of earth, oh, mortal proud!
 Gather thy skirts lest they be defiled
 By the pleading touch of some beggar child;

Tick, tick,—three, four—
 And the beggar child is thy peer, and more.

Up, up with your babel! yet, building high,
 The waters will cover it, bye and bye,
 When you, and I, with no gathered store,
 Shall be like the beggar, and quite as poor:

One, two, three, four—
 When the clock runs down, shall be quite as poor.



AT HIGH ROCK.

OH yes, they have told you, my beautiful one,
 Of the "mountains of life" and the "morning sun;"
 But, child, did they speak of the beautiful earth—
 As something that came of a nobler birth,
 Than the chance of atoms—of princely worth
 As the cradle of life for the farther on?

It is well to talk of the "golden gate"—
Of its world within and its high estate;
But it never will do to uplift the eye
With unbending gaze to the over-sky—
Unmindful of what may be nearer by—
Lest we trample some glory beneath our feet.

In the tenderest blade of the greening sod
Is an upward growth, that, if not of God,
Is a something, indeed, that would seem akin
From the wond'rous power that is hid within,
The bloom of the lily and rose to win,
From the quickened earth of the lowly sod.

The lamb may sport in the fields, aglee,
From morning to night, but what knows he
Of the gem he crops in the grass and flower?
When the fold is gained, and the day is o'er,
What joy hath he in the twilight hour?
So his slumber deepens what careth he?

But in thee, my child, is a spark divine—
A something of life that is *thee*, not *thine*:
Clay hath no soul, but the soul hath clay
That the current of years shall dissolve away—
Like the fading of night that reveals the day.
So, back of Nature, is that which tells
Of the spirit of growth in the world that dwells:
That through the years hath in grandeur trod
From the lower plane to the upward good—
From the crude to the perfect—the spirit of God.

And so I said to the little men,
And the little women that thronged the glen;
"Ye have sailed the lake and among the trees
Have swung, and swarmed, like the swarming bees,—
But to miss, perhaps, what is better than these—

E'en th' precious gems that adorn the sod,
 As the signet hand of the living God,
 Who, writing his name upon all below—
 The rocks, and hills, and the vallies too,—
 Would have us to read, and to surely know,—
 That He is God.

For so, my child, hath been writ in stones,
 Great themes of life who may read that runs:
 Put off thine shoes, e'en thine shoes of clay,
 And bowed to dust, at the altar pray
 For the God of grace to illume the way,
 So that, as climbing against the sky,
 Uplifts the veil from the bye and bye,
 Upon the mountains of wond'rous light,
 Shall echo thy gladness from height to height,
 With ever a morning, but never a night.

CONSOLATION.

SWIFT from the bow the poisoned arrow sped
 That laid the young lad low,
 Where summer grasses grow
 And careful feet the silent acres tread,
 Among the dead.

“The dead?” Not so—however it may seem
 To hearts that break;—
 Our lost ones, full awake,
 Are living on; or, life is but a dream—
 A cruel dream.

“Yes, 'tis our faith. I grant it all, my friend—”
 I hear the mourner say—
 “And yet with him away—
 And where? My feet must travel to the end—
 The bitter end.”

Peace, troubled soul! No empty words I speak
 Of wise, cold mystery,
 Of courteous sympathy—
 At fashion's dictate, or for custom's sake
 To such as thee.

Such words were mockeries. Yet, do I say to thee
 That, when death came to mine,
 From some sweet lip divine
 This promise came—ofttimes fulfilled to me—
 That sometime, from the sea,
 The lost would come to me.



THIS HERO OF OURS.

ALONG through the vallies and out from the dells,
 Is throbbing the pulse of the requiem bells.

A nation, bereaved, bends a sorrowful head
 O'er the tenantless dust of its mightiest dead.

A chariot moves with burthen and slow,
 To the notes of the drumbeat and muffled and low.

The cannon's "good bye" sounds from height unto height,
 And the bugle rings out with the soldier's good night.

The pageant is ended. The tomb hath been sealed,
 And death as the victor is holding the field.

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It is well that we pause in the whirl of our lives,
 To measure the force of the current that drives
 Our ship on its course, to the left or the right,—
 Like as one without compass yet cleaving the night:

To weigh in the balance and judge of their worth,
By the standard of truth, of the treasures of earth:—
The gold of ambition, that, tried in the flame,
Leaves only, perchance, but the dross of a shame;
The diamonds of grandeur, the silver of pride,—
What value, I pray, to the men that have died?
Their robes were of purple, it may be, and proud,
But they laid them all down when they took up the shroud.

The once mighty dust that, to-day, at the head
Of an army moves on to the realms of the dead,
Is defeated at last. Its battles are through:
All of earth that it claims measures six feet by two.

Yet cities contend for the place of its grave—
This valueless dust of our leader so brave;
And they promise of granite upreaching the sky,
To mark the proud earth where the ashes may lie.

But the granite shall crumble, forgetfulness claim
The tomb and its ashes—it may be their name;
Yet the deeds shall live on, ever blessing our shores,
Of the soul that indwelt them, this hero of ours.

* * * * *

To-day, but a toiler for scantiest bread—
Strange was the path that his destiny led;
To-morrow, the sword of his country he swings,
And straightway we find him the equal of Kings.

Where was the secret? Pray tell, if you can,
Other than this that God made him a man:
That never was found in his soldierly breast,
A place for a meanness to rankle or rest.

Proud as a victor though often he rode,
Still for the vanquished his sympathy flowed;
Never an arrow, that well could be spared,
Stung with its sharpness a breast that was bared.

Never unkindness was laid at the doors
 Of this man of our Manhood—this hero of ours.
 Gather about him, the blue and the gray—
 Gather about him this sorrowful day.

Land of the cotton, the orange and pine,
 Never at heart but a lover of thine;
 Into his tomb, as the ashes descend,
 Reach out the hand as of brother and friend.

I would not o'erpraise him, yet tell me, I pray,
 Of one that is found on the page of to-day,
 For grip on the right that knew not of defeat,
 With place more secure with the good and the great.

With Lincoln, who saved what the fathers had won;
 With Stanton, who slept not till duty was done;
 With Washington e'en, on mortality's shores—
 As a Saviour of men stands this hero of ours.



THE TEST FOR TRUE LIVING.

BY the taste of the grape we must judge of the vine,
 Or lowly it groweth, or tall;
 And so with our ethics, friend,—yours or mine,
 By their sweetness, they stand or fall.

A Sabbath day service may serve you an end,
 As a step in the ladder to heaven;
 But you never will mount very high, my friend,
 With but one good round in seven.

It is "steady and true" that ennobles the man—
 That upbuildeth the temple to-day;
 And all may do something to further the plan,
 Though each works in a different way.

So, let us not quarrel about the road,—
 None see quite around the bend!
 Each in his own way, let us live to the good,
 For "gude living will make a gude end."

THE SILK-WORM AND GLOW-WORM.

ONCE an unpretending silk-worm on a leafy hurdle lay,
When a gaudy little glow-worm chanced to pass along
that way.

“Neighbor,” said the haughty beauty, “surely I could never
see,

Why so very plain a creature should be suffered here to be.

“While upon that leafy hurdle you are hidden from the sight,
I am out among the grasses adding beauty to the night.

“All you seem to have to think of is to breakfast or to dine;
I am thinking but of glory and am living but to shine.”

With the dawn the silk-worm wakened and she gave the world
a boon,

In the winding sheet about her, in her wonderful cocoon.

And she sat within the palace and she fluttered on the throne.
In the little shining threadlet of her wonderful cocoon.

But the glow-worm's boasted glory made him all the surer
mark

For the night bird while his neighbor lay in safety in the
dark,

Unpretending, yet applauded by the world of living men;
While the glow-worm left behind him naught to tell that he
had been.

MORAL.

Feathered plumes and flashing jewels may be counted very
nice,

Yet for what of joy they give us we may pay too great a price.

Evermore let us be careful how we taunt the very least,
Lest the little one derided walk before us to the feast.

JAKE AND JOE.

QUAINT little fellows were my Jake and Joe,
Speaking sometimes much wiser than they knew
Of things that were, or things that ought to be;—
As if, some spirit, wiser, whispered through
The thin wrought veil of childhood unto me.

One evening at my feet while sitting low,
As with one voice, up spake this Jake and Joe,—
“A story, please! and, papa, let it be
One real true.” Old stories should be true,
And so I took the oldest that I knew.

Said I, a father once so loved his child
That he fenced in a garden from the wild,
And gave it him,—together with a wife,
Whom soon, it seems, a talking snake beguiled,
Into a raid upon the “tree of life,”

Which was forbade, though all the rest were free;
And yet the wicked pair this very tree
Conspired to rob, by which they fell disgraced
From high estate! Since when—as all agree,
Sin, “in the belly,” hath a bitter taste.

They say, moreover, that e’en from the first
This father knew his children were accursed,
If e’er the serpent crept within the gate;
Yet, that he left the creature to its worst,
Content to warn the sinner of his fate!

They say,—but here broke in my little Jake,
“What for they, papa, didn’t kill the snake?”
“What for he let him in at all?” said Joe,
“If he did not know what trouble he would make?”
Children, said I, be still!—I do not know.

They say that when this loving father saw
The sad condition of his broken law,
 Hot indignation fired his holy wrath;
So from its scabbard, quick the sabre flew
 That sent the sinner to eternal death!

They say, however, that four thousand years
Within a pit of wailing and of tears,
 So moved upon his loving soul, that he
Promised to save, henceforth, who might agree
 That he himself had died upon a tree.

They say,—but here upspoke our little Jake,
“If he let in the mischief-making snake,”
 (“And let him bite his chilluns, too,” said Joe,)
“Why didn’t he die for all!” “For goodness sake,”
 Said I, “Be still! I’m sure, I do not know.”

They say that, somewhere on this Father’s farm
Was dug a pit, where by his righteous arm
 To quenchless fire were cast the wicked two,
To burn forever! Up spoke our little Joe,
 “Me don’t beleib such stuff as that, do you?”

“The soul that sinneth, it shall surely die!”
There was the record—not to teach a lie,
What could I say to little Jake and Joe?
Back up the story of the pit of woe,
And horror chill their loving hearts? Well, no.

I changed the subject. Said I, they “say,”
That once to earth upon a Christmas day
A child came that in a manger lay,
To whom their incense did the angels bring,
While lowly bending as before a king.

And, furthermore, this little child, they say,
In after years did stand beside the way,
In meekness clad, all humankind to bless,
With only words of peace and tenderness;
And yet, ’tis said, they nailed Him to the cross,

To bear alone the burthen of the loss,
And, by His blood, sure reparation make
To offended justice. Up spake our little Jake,
“If me do wrong and you whip brudder Joe,
Is me all right?” What could I say or do?

I gave it up. No use, I plainly saw,
To talk about the justice of a law
That bans the many and redeems the few
To Jake and Joe, and so at once I said,
“Mamma, we’ll put these little ones to bed.”

Where, bending o’er them, in each chubby face
I sought in vain the “reprobate” to trace,
Whose “skulls” of old did “pave” the nether place!
And then bethought me of the words of Joe,
“I don’t beleib such stuff as that, do you?”

A FRAGMENT.

THERE is no death. The twinkle of an eye
And we are clothed with immortality!
A moment and from waiting have we passed,
Into life’s inner chamber as a guest,—
Ourselves the same in all that was before,
Save but the garments that our spirits wore:
The memoried past, ambition’s lofty aim,
Love’s friendships, joys—forevermore the same.
And men risk life for some poor sordid bliss,
Yet listless sit before a fact like this!
Alas, indeed, that should such tidings fall
On stony ears! That earth should be our all,
When, if we would, might to our opened eyes
Be seen the hosts descending from the skies,
And to our doors, on loving mission sent,
As came the strangers to old Abram’s tent:
The loving hosts, the vanished of our own,
That walk the earth and hunger to be known.

WELL DONE.

IT is not enough that you pay in gold
For his work what you may afford,
Yet, from the toiler, the grace withhold
Of a kindly and cheering word.

He hath labored long and with honest zeal,
To serve you, as best he could:—
Hath guided the chisel, or forged the steel—
In danger hath bravely stood!

The years run on, and he still may toil
At the forge, or at your command
May coax the fruits from a grudging soil,
By the sweep of his sturdy hand.

But his toil were sweeter, if could he know
That, when should the task be done,
Some kindly word there might be to show
That success had been fairly won.

There is many a spirit too proudly strung
To ask for the merit all its own,
That would roll as a morsel, sweet, under the tongue
This verdict of love, "Well Done."

THE GREAT TO-DAY.

THROUGH tortuous ways and o'er some rocky bed
The mountain stream is led;—
A moment more, and straightway on it grows
Where meadow grass and scented clover grows,
Blessing and brightening as it goes.

Upon the hills some majesty hath trod;
We mark the footsteps, and we say that God—
 Another name for truth—
With His great wand of fruitfulness and growth,
 Hath touched the sod.

So life's great tide sweeps on. The world grows old,
 Yet, as the years unfold,
Is caught fresh glimpses, by the traveled way,
Of something better for the great to-day,
 Than could be claimed for yesterday.

So, what were yester but the wild hedge rose,
 To-day its fragrance throws,
From queenly lip that scarce would deign to own,
The humble presence that it hath outgrown,
 As once its own.

I have no fellowship with those who vaunt
 The buried past, or chant
The rotten hulks of venerable time—
Their clinging barnacles and covering grime,
 As things sublime.

Praise though we may the conquerors of old
 In chants that rolled
Through great red seas of conquest and of blood,
Truth points to-day to better men that stood
 For God and brotherhood.

Here is a piece of pottery: perchance a vase,
 Some relic of a race
That lived and died. You tell me of its worth
In yellow gold! But, of a later birth,
 Are grander things of earth.

Things that no far off future shall exhume,
 From half forgotten tomb,
And brushing off millennial dust shall say,
Here is a glory from but yesterday,
 That cannot pass away.

FANCIES.

FIVE WORDS ONLY.

JUST a faded bit of paper,
Cut to fancy figures round;
Here a dove, and there a cupid,
Resting on a yellow ground.

In the centre there's a picture
Of whom angels might adore;
Underneath, a simple sonnet—
Only this, and nothing more.

“Nothing more?” Beyond comparing,
More, and better this, lang syne,
Written, and by loving fingers,
“I will be thy valentine.”

Five words only! Yet their promise,
Covering all these after years—
Brought the wooing—brought the mating—
Never sorrow, never tears.

Yesterday, somebody's daughter
Brought to me, of rare design,
What had once been thought a marvel,
Saying, “'Tis my valentine!”

But to me, this faded paper,
Treasured from the long ago,
Is by far more full of beauty,
Else I would not love it so.

Five words only ! Ah, my darling,
It is but a simple line;
Yet how much was in that promise,
“ I will be thy valentine ! ”

BABY BELLE.

DOWN from the gardens of love, one day,
Into a cottage a cherub strayed—
Sweet as the dew on the morning spray
By the breezes swayed.

Eyes that were blue as the violets bloom,
Cheeks that were pure as the lily, and white
Lips like the rose to the cottager's room,
Like a star in the night.

What say the destinies ? Baby, thine hand !
Whither do lines of thy destiny lead ?
Is there no charm from the mystical land
To help me to read ?

Hold ! were it wisdom to question of fate ?
Raiment the whitest may soil in the grime—
To know might be sorrow ; better to wait
The revealments of time.

Yet shall the light of thine innocent face,
Shine down upon me, whatever befall,
As a fullest revealment of beauty and grace
From memory's wall.

For I am persuaded that nothing is lost ;
Joy will repeat myself, beauty will bless.
If we ask, “ will such blessings repay us their cost ? ”
Love answereth, “ yes.”

AUTUMN.

IT is autumn; I know by the leaflets,
Yellow, and crimson, and browned,
Which slowly and sadly are falling
In mournful profusion around—
Low whispering their stories of sadness,
While softly they carpet the ground.

The rose and the myrtle have perished,
And round me lie scentless and dead,
And the warblers, whose carol I cherished,
From forest and bower have fled,
Like friends of life's sunshine who leave us
When darkness our skies overspread.

It is autumn; I know by the breezes
Which gently, and balmy and bland,
Now sigh through the branches deserted,
Of forest trees, olden and grand;
By the fruit and the corn heaps which cluster
Around at the farmer's command.

The moor cocks are hastily winging,
Alarmed by the starting sound
Of slaughtering guns, which are bringing
Their brothers and sires to the ground,
While the nut-hoarding squirrels are springing,
And chattering gaily around.

It is autumn; I know by the sunbeams
Now falling aslant on the earth;
By the swollen and leaf-thickened streams,
And the light of the faggot-hit hearth;
By the voice of all Nature rejoicing
In plenty, in feasting and mirth.

And day by day as he rideth by
In his gilded carriage, she wonders why
That never he turneth a kindly eye
On old Barbara Bray.

Patiently, cheerfully, all the same
 Turneth the wheel of the ancient dame,
 Stopping never for 'plaint or blame;
 What cares she for the sordid dance
 Of men at the shrine of circumstance?
 Gold can never the wealth enhance
 Of old Barbara Bray:

Wealth, that never can turn to dust,
Wealth of faith, and a holy trust
In Him that giveth the daily crust;
Toiling away in the peaceful light
That shimmereth down from gates so white,
Cometh there never unwelcome night
For old Barbara Bray.

Little she knoweth of doctrine; indeed,
 "God and her neighbor " is all of her creed;
 Short enough, truly, yet large as her need.
 Dry stalks may be gathered, and tares, it may be,
 But God is the Lord of the harvest, and He
 Will pay all His workmen, if faithful they be,
 Saith old Barbara Bray.

Strange that she should be toiling alone!
Strange, indeed, that there should be none
To share in the light of that old hearthstone!
Yet one there was, but he went before
Through the churchyard gate, and the marble-door;
And he waiteth above, on the golden shore,
For old Barbara Bray.

Others there were; but they faded away,
Some at the dawn, in the twilight gray,
And some in the pride of their summer day.

Yet oft, when the sunset hath lost its bloom,
And the shadows take shape in the deepening gloom,
Sweet voices come back to that little room,
And to Barbara Bray.

And then, no longer alone, alone,
Old Barbara sits by her quaint hearthstone;
For the past with its treasures is still her own.
She dreams of love, and she talks with her mates;
She clasps her darlings and patiently waits
For the angel that cometh to open the gates
For old Barbara Bray.

Nor waiteth she long; for already afar
Through the gloom of the night, like the glow of a star,
Is shining the light of her homeward car.
Whirling along o'er the track of the years,
Down through the valley of sorrow and tears,
Out from the field of the harvest it bears
Old Barbara Bray.

A moment, a breath! and the journey is o'er!
Her wheel at the window is seen no more;
But the tear-drop shall fall while the lowly and poor
Lay their garlands of love at the friendly door
Of old Barbara Bray.

THE DYING GIRL.

MOTHER, I'm going home;
The chill night winds will soon moan o'er the spot
Where these frail limbs; but, mother, I
Shall hear them not.

The sweet spring-time will come,
With budding trees and flowers all bright and fair,
And loving bands shall roam the hills, but I
Shall not be there.

Summer will come and go,
And leave the sere grass waving o'er my tomb,
And, the gentle flow'rs which love may scatter there
No more shall bloom.

But I am going home:
The wings of waiting angels fan my brow,
And pleasant tales they whisper of that land
To which I go.

I hear of lovely vales,
Through which bright streams of purest waters shine,
Where radiant forms, with harps of shining gold,
Are keeping time,

To songs of cherubim
And seraphim, which upward ever rise,
Like grateful incense to the throne of Him
Who rules the skies.

Oh, it is sweet to go
From earth thus early in life's blushing morn,
To leave untasted and unfelt each woe
And bitter thorns.

Then weep thou not for me,
For though the form which thou hast held so dear
Hath gone and left thee, like a blasted tree,
Leafless and sere,

Yet in that quiet hour,
When gentle stars look down most lovingly,
And seem to call the spirit homeward, then
I'll come to thee,

And I will clothe thy dreams
With the soft splendor of the spirit shore,
And whisper thee of lands where sorrow's streams
Shall flow no more.

Mother, my hour hath come;
Death creepeth o'er me like a gentle spell;
The world recedes; 'tis gone—I'm going home;
Mother, farewell!

THE RIVER OF TIME.

I.

I WAS sitting by a river, that was flowing onward, ever,
'Neath the green and golden branches of the over-arching
trees;

List'ning to the music gushes of the early morning thrushes,
In among the alder bushes that were bending to the breeze.

Curiously I watched the shadows, as they gathered from the
meadows,

And retreated up the mountain, from the undulating vale:—
Half awaking half a dreaming, suddenly there came a gleam-
ing

Out upon the waters, seeming, like the flashing of a sail.

Ship or phantom? Much I doubted; so with eager voice I
shouted,

“What ho, sailor! tell me truly, whence and whither do you
sail?”

But, as if all question spurning, as of matters unconcerning
Mortals merely, unreturning came the answer to my hail.

As within some grim surrounding, all the hollow air resound-
ing,

Trembles with the mystic voices that are seeming near at hand,
So an awe upon me stealing, brought a weird, portentous feel-
ing, as of

Ills about revealing that were brooding o'er the land.

II.

The sun was darkened and the shadows fell again upon the
meadows;

The mountain tops grew heavy, and the moss was on the trees;
Cot and palace quickly crumbled; thrones into oblivion
tumbled—

E'en the haughtiest castle, humbled, was as dust before the
breeze;

Haughty prelates that commanded kings and emperors
descended

To the sepulcher, forgotten, with the glamour of their day:
Even as unto the mowers fall the grasses and the flowers,
So this spirit of the hours levelled all upon his way.

At his touch the fairest maiden, as the clover honey-laden,
Bended to the staff of weakness, or sat crooning at the hearth;
Waved his hand and sculptured glory faded out from human
story,

Or in some tradition hoary kept the secret of its birth.

Even I that from his quiver as he passed me on the river
Caught an arrow that went chilling, thrilling through each
slowing vein;

Found the snow upon me drifting, and the frost around me
rifting,

Till my soul within me lifting, broke the bondage of the chain.

III.

Then a change came o'er my dreaming, and I saw the river
gleaming

With the morning that was passing to the brightness of the
day;—

Where, but late, were desolations, withered hopes and despolia-
tions,

Time with loving ministrations was upbuilding by the way,—

Higher, better, wider portals for the coming in of mortals,
To reunion with the Father at the table of the Son;
And, through errors diminution, by the grandest evolution,
Making more than restitution for the evil that was done.

Even more: as down the river, sailing on and on forever,
Time revealeth yet more plainly of a something yet before;
Though the finite comprehendeth scarcely that which never
endeth,

Sure am I the journey tendeth to unfolding evermore.

Where many a craft, having missed its way,
Went down in the whirl of the ocean spray.

And so it came that a warning light,
Was steadily hung, on a stormy night,
From a crag that over the breakers frowned,
As a guiding mark for the inward bound.

* * * * * * *

Upon the shores of the peaceful bay,
In a humble cot by the traveled way,
A maiden dwelt that, far and near,
Was known as the Maid of Lindermere.

Over the bay, on a rocky crest,
Was a fisher's cot, like an eagle's nest:
And underneath, in the bay below,
Was a beautiful ship as white as snow,

That kissed the wave with a loving lip:
And he of the cot and he of the ship
Was he whom 'twas said had a title clear
To the hand of the maid of Lindermere.

One hapless morning, the son and heir
Of whom that was known as the village squire,—
(A dashing fellow, whose showy ways
Set half of the hearts in town ablaze,)

Had caught a smile from the little dame
That fired his heart with a tender flame,
And brought him a suitor at her feet
With the lover's story, old and sweet.

I think the maiden was half in play
When she spake of a hope for another day;
Yet where is the heart, or young or old,
That flutters not at the touch of gold?—

Though scarce desired; with a bird in hand,
The neighboring bush was never scanned

For brighter plumes. With bended ear
The sailor heard, from a thicket near,
The disloyal words. Across his path
Had a serpent ran. In righteous wrath
Should he crush it out ere with poisoned breath
It had stung his soul to a worse than death?

Between the flames of a burning hate
And a tender love did his vengeance wait,
Till, at length, he turned from the fateful place,
Lest deeds of blood should his love disgrace.

And then he wrote in a tender line,
“I thought, my darling, to call you mine;
But love were selfish—ambition mad,
To claim the hand that another had;

“Would cover with gems, where only I
Might place the signet of poverty.
Farewell, farewell! let my witness be
The angels above, that I love but thee.

“Farewell, farewell! With returning sail,
If my ship shall prosper upon the gale,
And gold is mine, and thou art free,
In the bye and bye I will come for thee.”

Alas for the maid! of her promised hand
She had told the youth, but his gold and land
For the moment dazed, and, half in play,
She heard the tempter, nor turned away

As she would have done (and she saw it now)
Had her head been wise as her heart was true.
Yet hope was hers. He would come, he said,
And so by the sea as the slow years sped

She waited long, but no inbound sail
Came in, as of old, with her lover's hail.
On the seaward crag, when the nights were dark,
She lighted her lamp as a guiding mark

For her lover's eye. Sometimes she wrote,
In a tender way, some plaintive note,
Explaining how she had not meant a wrong,
And how she had waited, alas, how long!

Then casting it forth to the tremulous sea,
She would sing, "He will come, he will come to me;"
Or when the breezes were off the land
She would tell them her story and give command

That they fly on their swiftest pinions forth,
To search out her lover if on the earth,
And tell him how she, when the stars are dim,
Had lighted a lamp on the crag for him.

One night as she lay in a troubled dream,
A tempest's crash and the lightning's gleam
She heard and saw, while a ship from sight
Was whirled and dashed in the breakers white.

The vision changed to a dream of peace;
Above her bended a loving face,
And the whisper came, "If thy hand is free,
To-night, my darling, I come for thee.

She looked, and lo! on the shining bay
Her lover's ship at its anchor lay;
And, high aloft, as against the sky,
Was floating again as in days gone by,

His hailing flag. On its wings away
The soul took flight from its beautiful clay,
With the song—as it cast from its moorings free,
"To-night, my laddie, hath come for me.

* * * * *

The morning dawned on a peaceful scene;
The maiden lay with a face serene,
As if each moment of ending bliss
Had left on the clay its full impress.

With kindly offices for the dead,
 The neighbors came with a careful tread:
 The sexton, too, with a friendly spade,
 To cover the dust of the little maid,
 That—so the parson himself declared,—
 Had gone to the judgment “well prepared.”

Upreared by whom that had loved her well—
 Howe'er unwise, in the trysting dell,
 'Neath sheltering trees is a marble shaft,
 Whereon these words have been epitaphed:

“At her command,
 By a single word, was there gold and land:
 Yet choosing a humbler path to tread—
 E'en that where love and her duty led,
 From year to year
 She lighted the lamps of Lindermere;
 Singing, sometime, oh murmuring sea,
 Sometime my laddie will come for me.”

BARNEY McKAY.

IT was “once on a time,” as the story men say,
 That there dwelt in a cottage that stood by the way,
 Where a brook crossed the road, as it crosses to-day—
 Brow-furrowed and gray—
 A man that was known as old Barney McKay,—
 Whom the neighbors called, lovingly, Barney McKay.

Just back from the road, on the banks of a stream
 That over the rocks, with a flash and a gleam,
 Drove headlong its team,
 Stood a little old mill that, though rusty and browned,
 All the country around
 Was famous, because of the grists that were ground
 By its miller, Old Barney McKay,

Now this miller McKay was a quaint little man,
With words that were few and with thoughts that outran
All the dogmas and teachings of party and clan,
 Though never, indeed,
Did he think of his duty, in shape of a creed;
 Yet the neighbors declare,
'That Barney was never a scoffer; indeed,
He quarrelled with no man because of his creed:
Yet all things he questioned. E'en doubt, as he said,
Was "more to our credit than faith that was dead,
Or that swallowed, untasted, the doctrinal bread."
The miller's idea of religion was this,
Not that dogmas and creeds, in themselves amiss
To such as could never move onward, unless
In a harness of words, but this much he said,
That the "Master had promised the giver of bread,
Or the cup of cold water, for charity's sake,
That the deed as if done to himself he would take;
But nowhere he taught that the doctrinal letter,
Made a deed that was good, e'en the worse or the better."

Inspired, as by nature, with mystical lore,
In the dust that had gathered, and thick on the floor,
Strange symbols he drew that he strove to explain—
Of the problems of life with the grinding of grain:
There were arches and pillars and circles and squares,
There were ladders of Jacob and mystical stairs,
And the lessons of all were that, circled by love,
And spanned by the arches of goodness above;
"That coin in my hand," the old miller would say,
"Is a loan from my father, which I must repay:
And the child of his love that is sick and forlorn,
 Or weary and worn,
Is the agent he sendeth to take up the loan,
 And recover his own.
Our life hath two sides—the outer and inner:

Who lives to the one lives the life of a sinner,
 Who lives to the other God maketh the winner,"
 Said Old Barney McKay.

In matters of doctrine he was wrong, it may be,
 Though with Longface, the deacon, he tried to agree,
 Yet he cyphered and cyphered, and still could not see
 How three could be one, or how one could be three,
 Since even the deacon—as wise as most men,—
 Acknowledged that five was not equal to ten.

And, as for atonement, "we never should pack,"
 Said Old Barney, "our sins on an innocent back.
 For, our bargain with nature is this, in the main,
 For so much of sin to take so much of pain:

As ever we go, forever we pay—

God keepeth no ledger," said Barney McKay.

That in all of his dealings, by plummet and square,

 Walked this Barney McKay:

By the plummet of truth, and the square of the right,
 With thoughts that were clean, and a faith that was bright,

 Walked the miller, Old Barney McKay.

Strange fancies sometimes may have crept through his brain;—
 Indeed, there were those who declared it as plain,
 Though sound on most topics and right in the main,
 That a crotchet or two had slipped into the brain,

 Of Old Barney McKay.

For Barney, somehow, lived ahead of his time—

For things of the present he cared not a dime,

Except in so far as they helped him to climb

The steps that uplead to that temple sublime

 Whose "Three, Five and Seven,"

Have their base, so he said, on the level of time,

 And their landing in heaven.

'Twas a saying of Barney, that "giving is having,"

Or as sometimes he phrased it, that "losing is saving:"

For, said he," what I keep I must leave here below,

What I give I take with me wherever I go;
Who squarely that walked could not fail him to climb
To the temples of light by the ladder of time."

But a skeptical world shook a skeptical head
At the miller's investments and sneeringly said,
 "That stock will not pay,
For soon on the street will be begging his bread,
 'This Barney McKay."

But the years came in and the years went out,
And its great black arms, so burly and stout,
From its home in the pit, the wheel reached out,
And up through the floors of the brown old mill,
Its energies sent, with a sturdy thrill,
Till the whirling stone, to the belt and wheel,
Turned the poor men's grain into golden meal;
And often, for weight, did there nothing lack—
Because of the toll—in the homeward sack.

The world looked on, with a curious eye,
But ne'er fulfilled was its prophecy;
For the years flowed on, as the years will flow,
And the miller's locks grew white with snow;
His footsteps slackened a bit, may be,
As he neared the shores of the silent sea;
But he talked with God, as he moved along,
Till his heart was brave, as his soul was strong.
He caught love beams in their earthward flight,
And he bent them round in a sphere of light,
Which the angels filled with their presence bright;
And down the slope to the setting sun,
He scattered his grain, as they led him on,
Till, bye and bye, when his work was o'er,
He gathered his wealth on the hither shore,
And the angels helped him to ferry it o'er;
But ne'er, to the last, did his right hand know,
What his left had done in this world below.

And he prayed for the widow by filling her cruse.
Though slender his purse, yet, in poverty's home,
His step was a sunbeam that scattered the gloom.
Tread lightly, then, stranger, and over the bier
Of this friend of the lowly, drop the meed of a tear.

THE TWO FACES.

ONE day as I stood by the river's brink,
I saw in the waters clear,
A head that was covered with golden locks,
And a face that was young and fair.

As I frowned or smiled, a smile or a frown
Spread over the face and brow;
I spake, but no answering word came back
From the mocking lips below.

The march went on. In the after years
I stopped by that stream again,
And bending timidly over the bank
I sought for that face in vain.

The sky and the water were still the same;
And there was an imaged face,
With something, perhaps, of the old time look,
But where was the youthful grace

That lighted the eye with hopefulness,
For a ship from the outer sea,
With a freightage of all that was great and good,
That, sometime, would come to me?

I looked again in the waters clear,
And under the wrinkled face
I saw that, awaiting and biding its times
Was the germ of a better grace,

That grew into strength till, as I looked,
Again to the shining day,
The child came forth, as if from a clod
That the waters had washed away.

And yet but as one that had missed its way
On a wide and a darkened plain,—
Retracing its steps to the parting roads—
To take up its staff again.

THE TYING OF THE GREENS.

STANDING one day at the porch of a pretty village church,
Thus communing with myself I said, "I wonder what it means,
With the Christmas time so near, that should nothing yet appear
In the way of preparation for the tying of the greens!"

I remember well the time, when the girls were in their prime,—
The pretty girls that still are 'mong our ruling village queens;
When the boys, so gallant then, now among our husband-men,
Used to gather at the chapel for the tying of the greens.

All the Christmas week before had we ranged the country o'er,
For such treasures of the woodlands as our busy hands could glean;
Till with hemlock, fur and pine, and the pretty running vine,
We had stocked up well and fully for the tying of the greens.

What a fragrance filled the air, as if had been gathered there
All the genii from the mountains, breathing in upon the scene!

From the pulpit to the porch, in that staid, old-fashioned
church,

What a ruling of disorder from the tying of the greens.

While among the people there, it had been our vision clear,
From behind some tiny leaflet had a little chap been seen,
Whirling arrows through the air at a loving little pair,
That were standing at the altar and were tying up the greens.

Later on, as hand in hand, at the altar did they stand—
He as proud as any monarch, she as happy as a queen,
All the jealous maidens said, with a tossing of the head,
“It is now the jolly parson that is tying up the green.”

But for all of that, to-day, bravely plodding on their way,
They will say, “as for repentance we know not what it
means;”

That “for mutual happiness and forevermore” they bless
The day they came together for the tying of the greens.

So as standing in the porch of that little village church,
I pondered and I wondered to myself, “What could it mean,
That so near the Christmas time there should be no gathered
pine,

E’en no calling from the belfry to the tying of the green.

Ah, but then came back the thought, ready made, that these
are bought—

“Burning bush” and wreath and crosses for “illumination”
scenes!

Still I hear the merry chime of the dear old Christmas time,
When we blended love with duty in the tying of the greens.

MY WIFE.

I HAD in my heart a sweet little song,
And this, as it ran, was the theme—
“I love and I love as the day it is long,
So loving, of love do I dream.”

One day, to myself, it was thus that I said,
“I will breathe out my song on the air:
Who knows but some one may be waiting to wed,
Somewhere in the world—somewhere?

“My song will be heard in the palace, maybe,
Or only perchance in the cot;
If one, or the other, what matter to me,
So blessing but follow my lot?”

So I tuned up my harp and I sang to the air,
As only a lover can sing;
And the answer that came was an answer so fair,
That I deemed it a fortunate thing.

E'en so did it prove; for I say this to you,
That, of all that hath blessed me in life,
That answering maiden hath proven most true—
My counsel, my lover—my wife.

LITTLE THINGS.

OH, A LITTLE THING is the pearly spring,
As it leaps from the mountain side,
But gathering strength as it flows at length,
It filleth the valley wide!
And the ships that ride on its morning tide,
Or sleep on its evening breast,
May never dream of the parent stream,
Far up on the mountain's crest.

And a little thing is the germ that springs
From the nut in the nursing mold!
But the years go by, and against the sky
Up looms the oak tree bold!
And the birds that sing 'mid its boughs, or swing
On its topmost branches high,
May never know, as they come and go,
How that little one reached the sky.

Aye! a little thing is the word that springs,
Like a shaft from the bended bow!
But the hearts that are wrung by the careless tongue,
On the earth we may never know;
Yet, up in the sky, in the by and by,
We may find tall trees have grown
All along the road,—for evil or good,—
From the little seeds we've sown.

THEY ARE SEVEN.

OVER the hills to the southward,
And down to the sea,
Out from a christian city
I bent my way,
Through fields aflame with the golden rod,
And sweet, as it were, with the breath of God,
One Sabbath day.

Along by the country highways
Flashed the sumach red,
Like an army with fiery torches,
While, overhead,
On the bending boughs with chuckle and churr,
Awaiting the opening chestnut burr,
Was the squirrel gray.

Out on the sloping hillsides
The white buckwheat,
Gave to the honey makers
Their annual treat;
While up to their eyes in the second crop
Of timothy grass or clover cup,
The cattle were seen.

From nature's uncounted voices
Everywhere,
Anthems of labor and gladness
Filled the air,
With never a hint of a day of rest;
Or, out of the seven, that one was best
For praise or prayer.

And yet, as from rival belfries,
The clamorous tongue
Of the Sabbath bell resounded
The hills among;

Conscience, that something which seems to stand
With an ancient sort of a whip in hand,
To goad the wrong,—

Pointing the ten commandments,
Named the fourth,
As if that still was binding
Upon the earth,
Until, for the moment methought I saw
But the fierce avenger, for his broken law,
Of an angry God,

But then came the admonition,
Somehow, there might
Be things that “the fathers” taught us
Not wholly right,
Since oft, in the past, for conscience sake,
Had Truth been burned at the martyr’s stake,
Or crucified.

And I said, of the holy Sabbaths,
They are seven;
And if unto righteous living
They are given,
Such paths of old as the Master trod,
On any or all of the days of God,
Must lead to heaven.

And so as I turned me homeward
From the sea,
Thanks did I give for the mercy
That for me—
As I might wish—was a day of rest,
On which to sit, as a welcome guest,
With flock, and herd, and bird, and bee,
At the honey feast.

THE TWO FISHERS.

UPON the stocks at Fargo Bay, two fishers, trim and staunch,
 Full-rigged, and ready for the sea, stood ready for the launch;
 For months the wonder of the town, like sisters twain they grew,
 Each daily step by critic tongue declared a triumph new.

Two sons old Skipper Tarpaulin had brought up to the sea:
 Bold, hardy fellows, straight and tall as one could wish to see;
 And thus to them the skipper said, "Now harkee, lads," I say,
 "That I will build two gallant ships right here in Fargo Bay,
 And ye shall hold them in command, and as ye strive to win
 Life's honest wage, so shall it be," said Skipper Tarpaulin.

* * * * *

The morning opened bright and fair,—it was the launching day—
 And all the people from the hills came flocking to the Bay,
 In rustic best all gaily clad—a long expectant line,
 To see the deftly fashioned craft go dashing to the brine.

All night the sound of hammer told the story of the few
 Remaining things, when all is done, it takes so long to do;
 Until, at length, the word goes forth, "all ready, clear the way,"
 And swift the Rover and Seagull glide downward to the bay,
 Where each as proudly sat the wave, amid resounding cheers,
 And quite at home, as if had been her voyage that of years.

* * * * *

Along the quay at Fargo Bay was hast'ning tramp and tread;
 Full brimming eyes spoke last good byes that could not else be said.

The priceless gifts that tenderness for many a day had
planned—

The kiss of love, the mother's prayer, the patriarch's blessing
hand,

All came within the parting hour, and then th' unwilling oar
Two score and ten of hardy men pulled outward from the
shore.

Jack Tarpaulin, the skipper's son, the elder of the twain,
Was he that took the Rover's helm to pilot o'er the main:
Firm, self-reliant, bold and brave, he asked no "fortune's
gale "

To bring the gage he had not earned, or fill an idle sail.
God helps who help themselves, he said, and to the realms of
snow,
For wage of oil through honest toil he turned his steady
prow.

The Seagull spread her snowy sail but on the fairest breeze;
With easy hand she dropped her nets along the summer seas.
Yet on the port or larboard side, however down she let
Her meshes fine, no hand divine brought fishes to her net.
So when, at length, her bootless prow turned homeward on its
way,

No higher marked her water line than when she left the Bay.

"Now, by my faith," the skipper cried, with sorrow overcast,
"Who treads the Seagull's quarter deck shall sail before the
mast.

For, whom doth wait for luck or fate, to pave his way with
flowers,

Is not the man to lead the van in this rough world of ours."

* * * * *

Along the quay, at Fargo Bay, was hastening to and fro—
The village tongue, though loosely hung, found all that it
could do

To solve the mystery of the hour; the proud Seagull had
fled:

With owlsh eyes each gossip wise did shake a knowing head.

The ship had lifted anchor and upon the outward tide
Had swept adown the sleeping bay toward the ocean wide.
"The north, the north!" bold Harry cried. "Before me, in
a dream,
In icy grip my brother's ship was 'prisoned in the stream.

Nor was it all a dream, I fear. I saw my brother's form
As 'twere a giant lifted up in battle with the storm;
While each proud mast bent to the blast—as reed though it
had been,—
'This desperate prayer thrilled on the air, "God save me, and
my men!"

The north, the north! Wide seas they sailed through tempest
torn and tossed,
Mid flake and floe and winter snow, with lookout for the lost,
Till one day came the stirring cry, "Ahoy, there, ship ahoy!"
And to the ear came sharp and clear an answering shout of
joy.

Now, for your lives, bold Harry cried, let every sail be spread,
And o'er the wide half frozen tide the Seagull swiftly sped.
"Starboard the helm! Port! Steady, now," and through the
pack and floe,
As if 'twere charmed the ship unharmed drove on her
'venturous prow;
Till once again the sisters twain, though wide the path they
braved,
Upon the tide lay side by side,—the saviour and the saved.

* * * * *

On every shore where hardy men are found to brave the
flood,
Are wives with but a single plank 'twixt them and widowhood:
Where tender love with matchless faith in tidings yet to be,
Through summer's sun and winter's storms sit waiting by the
sea.

And, as in each sea-faring town, so was it at the Bay,
With naught to cheer, each added year sped swifter on its
way.

Some buoyant souls, that mourned no dead, spake grand
enough and brave,

But when did mere philosophy bring comfort from the grave?
 "Consoleth men?" Oh yes, but then the chair is vacant
 still;—

E'en hearts of oak have throbbed and broke above the sod—
and will.

* * * *

“A sail, a sail!” the lookout cries, the people throng the quay,

As, from the looking headlands born, two ships come up the
bay;

The one, the Rover, bold and brave, though but a shattered wreck,

Yet with the oil of hardy toil full loaded to the deck!

The other, rich in that great wealth which is not of the dust—
That coin which as the ages roll goes never to the rust—

Was she that 'mid the flake and floe where midnight shadows
lay,

Did snatch her mate from danger's gate and lead her back
to-day.

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

Sometimes behind a graceless form is hid some power for good,

That fails of what is called success (because not understood,) Until at length, by blow or blast, the treasure long concealed Beneath the dust of circumstance is to the eye revealed.

So with the younger Tarpaulin, the marvel of the town,
To him what were the will-o'-wisps that men so hunted down
But disappointment in the hand, as on some dashing shore,
The bubble grasping hand is left as empty as before?

The Rover's captain sailed the seas, nor storm he shunned nor
cold,

Content if with the ending cruise he harvested of gold.

The life beyond! go to! he said; a dreamer's idle tale!

Three score and ten, alas! and then the covering of the vale!

From nature's lips he little heard that spoke of aught but
gold;

Sun, moon and stars gave light and heat, what more could
they unfold?

The pearliest shell upon the beach, evoked no thrill of joy—

It had no meat; enough for him to spurn the idle toy.

And yet as men do judge of men, he was a salt of earth,

That seasoned many a winter's tale around the evening
hearth;

While, to the last, mere worldlings saw in Harry but the sin

Of weak unthrift, and shook the head, and croaked the "might
have been."

There comes a time when from the eye this guinea scale shall
fall,

When through the night God's holy light shall e'en reveal to
all,

How, broader than the broadest guage where mammon's
chariots roll,—

Upleading to the sunlight, are the highways of the soul.

A BIRTH-DAY RHYME.

ONCE there came a little maiden
Here to dwell,—
From the earth or out of Aidenn,
Who can tell?
Though she came in chill November,
Was her wardrobe thin and small;
One pink suit—as I remember—
Covered all.

Gems of beauty, since, and costly,
Deck her form—
Silken windings from the ghostly
Shrouded worm
Wreathe and clothe with airy lightness,
Yet the little soul, I ween,
Radiant shines, through all the brightness,
From within.

Yielding love and fond affection
Fullest due;—
She to every right conviction,
Firm and true.
Nay, I would not praise unduly;
Mine are not the flatterer's ways,
Still, who liveth well and truly,
I will praise.

Yet, whatever here affection
Chance to paint,
Deem not that life's full perfection
E'er is meant:
“Human?” thanks that she *is* “human,”
Else, to us, she had no birth!
Else had missed this little woman
From the earth.

II.

Swiftly on the years are speeding;
 Womanhood is at the door:—
 Round the mountain upward leading
 On before,
 Lies the lover's path of beauty;—
 Gallant knights and castles fair;
 Tender songs of plighted duty
 Fill the air.

What his name, I cannot tell you,
 But I see him by thy side;
 And I hear him whisper "will you,
 Will you, darling, be my bride?"
 Sweetly comes the truthful answer
 From the honied lips, and low,
 "I am thine as thou art mine, sir,—
 Where thou goest I will go."

"Hath he gold, and mighty holdings?—
 Jewelled treasures from the mine?"
 Take no thought for such unfoldings
 So that love and peace are thine.
 Fortune may its baubles give us;
 Fashion—every vain device!
 Yet for what of joy they leave us,
 We may pay too great a price.

MY DREAM.

I HAD, one night, a dream—a curious dream,
 Of things which, here, I cannot fully tell.
 A child, methought from far realm I came,
 I knew not how, upon the earth to dwell.

Hungered and helpless, I was fully fed—
 Empty of purse, yet, somehow, was I clad;
 I grew apace, and daily was I led
 O'er pathways bright as e'er a mortal had.

* * * *

Years rolled away. Pleasure, in every guise,
 Such as for gold the devotee may gain,
 Came at command; while down, as from the skies
 Came beauty smiling with her shining train.

Luxuriant fields my granaries did fill,
 Each autumn time, with free and generous store;
 My flocks and herds were flocking every hill—
 Wife, children, friends, what could I ask for more?

* * * *

I trod the earth, I cannot tell how long—
 In dreams but little reck we of the time:
 I only know that, somehow, came among
 My thinning locks the snow flake and the rime.

Around me, watched impatient by my hairs,
 Disordered lay, in heaps, my worldly store;
 While from my gaze in outward rank defiled,
 Hopes, joys, ambitions to the nevermore.

One day, methought, my slowing footsteps led
 To craggy heights outlooking to the sea,
 And with half frantic turning to the dead,
 I sought for tidings of the yet to be:

Something beyond— some fair, outlying land,
 Where to survive the parting of the breath!
 "Give me," I cried, to touch one vanished hand,
 And death, to me, shall nevermore be death."

I neared the brink, and looking out below,
 With beckoning hands uprose upon the deep
 Bright myriad forms, and whiter than the snow;
 I sprang the cliff—and wakened from my sleep.

THE BEGGAR'S CHRISTMAS.

I.

PINCHED with hunger and numb with cold,
 Wan and weary, and strangely old,
 A beggar child, in rags arrayed,
 Through the streets of a city strayed
 One Christmas eve.

'Round the corners the drifting snow,
 Whirling, eddying to and fro,
 Buried the earth in a fleecy shroud,
 As th' tempest shrieked from cloud to cloud,
 That Christmas eve.

Christian people, with nimble feet,
 Hurrying over the frozen street,
 Spurned the little one's pleading prayer,—
 Spurned the look of mute despair
 That the beggar gave!

"Only a penny," the baby said,
 "Only a penny to buy me bread!"
 The haughty daughter of fortune passed,
 Cold and pitiless as the blast,
 That Christmas eve,

Declaring "she never yet could see
 Why beggarly brats, like this, should be,
 With whimpering words and naked feet,
 Permitted to walk the city street,
 On such an eve."

Giving the beggar a parting frown,
 And gathering up her trailing gown,
 From shop to shop, for their dainty sheen,
 She scattered her gold, like a fairy queen,
 That Christmas eve!

Then, through the porch, and up the aisle
 Of the brilliant church, with a gracious smile,
 She swept along to a cushioned pew,
 To hear the story of old anew,
 That Christmas eve:

Of the Wonderful One, of lowly birth,
 Whose head was pillowed upon the earth:
 O'er whom the beautiful song began,
 Of "peace on earth, good will to man,"
 One Christmas morn.

The opening chant, through the gothic pile,
 Re-echoed and rang in each gilded aisle;—
 The creed was said, and the head was bowed,
 And the minister prayed to the critical crowd
 That filled the pews.

The carefully worded sermon told
 Of the terrible sin of—Adam, old:
 And the whip was cracked o'er the blundering Jews,
 But never it reached the paying pews,
 That Christmas eve!

II.

Homeless, friendless, over the street,
 Hurried the babe with frozen feet;
 Everywhere at the window pane,
 Beautiful gifts as ever were seen
 Loaded the trees of box and fir;
 Strange that there should be none for her,
 That Christmas eve!

For, what was she but a child of God?
 Or, was she made of a cheaper clod?
 Else, why, alone, was she bearing the rod,
 Of hunger and cold?
 (Alas! the beggar had yet to learn

That wheresoever her eyes may turn,
The greatest of sins that men discern
Is the lack of gold!)

Over the tempests' mad refrain,
Hark! she heareth the choral strain!
"Peace on earth, good will to men,
Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Trembling, she enters the sacred door,
Where never a beggar went before,
But the burly sexton, fierce and stout,
To the blinding tempest turned her out
That Christmas eve.

For, what should the waif be doing there
In that beautiful church, so tall and fair?
A chapel built in another street
Was the place for rags and naked feet,—
A sort of a steerage passage, meet
For such as she.

The service ended, the grace was said,
And the ponderous throated organ led
In thund'rous note, with clash and clang,
While the salaried prima donna sang,
That Christmas eve,—

Of the beggar child of a lowly maid,
That once in a cattle stall was laid!
But whom th' attendant angels knew
As King of the Gentile and the Jew,
That Christmas day;—

Yet whom was spurned as was spurned the Man!
The Pharisee placing Him under the ban,
As the modern Pharisee would have done
That night, had He come with that beggarly one,
In His ancient garb.

III.

The storm went by and the sun came out,
And the Christmas tree sends many a shout
From the sons of men, and the daughters fair,
For the gifts of love that its branches bear,
That Christmas morn.

In a sheltered nook, by the proud old church,
Was a heap of snow, where the beadle's search
Revealed the babe, that had dared the wrong,
Outside, to listen to the Christian song,
That hallowed eve!

The pitying winds had found her there,
And had covered her o'er with a tender care,
Till an angel came with a loving arm,
And bore her away from the pelting storm
That Christmas eve.

And who shall say that the beggar's soul,
As it woke to life in the shining goal,
Found not a tree that was green and tall,
Whose gifts for her were the best of all
That Christmas eve?

In a nameless grave lies the beggar's form:
But it sleeps as well as its sister worm,
Whose stately marble, above its bed
May lift a chiseled and costly head,
With a storied name.

For, after the shafts of the battle are fled,
And a truce is called to bury our dead,
Beggar or king—whatever the caste,—
The only field that we hold at last,
Measures six by two!

MY VILLAGE HOME.

SWEET village, nest'ling 'mong the hills,
Which skirt yon crystal stream,
Where'er I roam thy mem'ry fills

My fancy's brightest dream.
Above thee—like a champion bold—
Proud "Castle Rock" uprears
Against the west his rugged crest,
Unscathed by passing years.

And yonder, too, against the blue
Of distant northern skies,
"Rock Rimmon" lifts his frosty prow,
And th' wintry blast defies.
Thy sloping hills, thy sparkling rills,
Thy woods and fields so gay,—
How vivid to my mind they bring
The hours of life's young day!

Once more a boy! I feel the thrill
Of young life in my veins,
As Time awhile with len'ient hand
Removes his cumb'ring chains.
Once more a boy! as free, as free
As th' wild gazelle I fly!
Sorrow? 'tis all unknown to me,
For my heart is full of joy.

Around my form I feel once more
Fond loving arms entwine;
And starry eyes, which I adore,
Gaze upward into mine.
Yet all too soon the dream is past,
And then with power untold,
Comes back to me the sad'ning thought
That I am growing old.

I'm growing old ! my step grows weak,—
My cheek hath lost the glow,
Which health and strength did once bespeak,
Some thirty years ago.
Yes, I've grown old ! yet, smiling vale,
My thoughts still turn to thee,
For 'neath thy green and hallowed sod,
Lies many a memory.

And one,—'tis of a little maid,
Our household joy and pride;
One cheerless day, she went away,
Down by the river's side.
And this is why, when I am sad,
My thoughts revert to thee;
That little maid, once mine—now thine,
My darling "Jennie Lee."

Thus while a dweller 'mong thy hills,
My cup seemed full of joy;
I drank it to the dregs, but found
'Twas not without alloy.
Still I'm content: for thus 'tis e'er
In this fair world of ours,
Along the roughest, darkest road,
We find the fairest flowers.

Hills of my childhood ! green old hills !
Where'er on earth I roam,
Thou'rt still the dearest spot to me,—
My own loved village home.
And when at last my wearied limbs
Must seek their final rest,
The wand'rer fain would lay them down
Upon thy loving breast.

EMPTY IS THE COAL BIN.

EMPTY is the coal bin; but the winter is not gone—
The mill wheel has not started, as we hoped it would
have done:

Saith the coal men (who can blame them) "till shall come a
better day,

We shall have to stop the credit since we cannot get the pay."

Empty is the coal bin and the winter is not gone:

We stand up in the corners, but there's nothing to be done.

The garments are but slender that the baby limbs enfold:

God help thee, little children, through the bitter, bitter cold.

* * * * * p *

Empty is the coal bin. How many of us know,
With that little spoken sentence, of its misery and woe?
For us what does it matter, though at zero, every day,
Stands the little silver column, or below it, even, pray?

Our coal bin is not empty, so heap the glowing grate,
Fill up the hungry furnace and bless our better fate;
But, for empty bins and barrels, while praying God to care,
As the stewards of this bounty let us follow up the prayer.

For behold! Are we not kinsmen? And if one shall periled
be

By midnight conflagration or by death upon the sea,
And no hand be stretched for saving will it not be held a
blame?

If 'twere any other peril, were it any less a shame?

A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

I.

WHEN the harvest hath been gathered, and the forest
trees are bare,

And the meadows lose their freshness, and the frost is in the
air;

When the chickens have been slaughtered, and the strutting
turkey cock

Leadeth off, with empty gobble, his procession to the block;

And the smell is in the kitchen of the apple and the quince,

And the chopping knife is busy with the sausage and the
mince—

Not by any sort of sequence, but because it so hath been

All the years that I have wandered in this wilderness of men—

Then I know that for the favored ones of fortune, at the least

Will be coming Merry Christmas with a merry, merry feast.

II.

When to secret hiding places do the little maidens trip,

With precautionary signals on the finger and the lip;

At some threatened interruption, putting something quick
away,

With a look as if had nothing, there, been doing all the day;

When the sphynxes take possession, even of the elder tongue,

So that only by the favored is the secret to be wrung;

When the children lie and listen, underneath the winter roof,

For the dancing of the reindeer and the patter of its hoof;—

Then I know that Merry Christmas will be coming with its
chime,

And the fragrance of the cedar and the glory of the pine.

III.

What a rushing to the city! What a pattering of feet!

What a Babel of the voices, from the crowd upon the street!

How the shopmen are delighted! How they nod, and how
they wink

To the question, ' Will it please her ?' " Will it suit him, do you think ?"

Hear the little wife communing—all about the Christmas tree—

" I wonder what my darling has been purchasing for me. Something nice, I'm very certain—quite the richest of them all—

And my own poor little trifles, they will look so very small !"

Nay, not so, dear little woman; when thy story he hath learned,
How by littles and by littles was the purchase money earned,
If he hath a heart within him, he will tell you, many fold
More of value are your " trifles " than if only they were gold;
For it is a truth forever and forever, on the earth,
That the only coinage current that hath any real worth,
Is the one that bears the image of the blessed one above,
Whose sign and superscription is the signature of Love.

IV.

Merry Christmas ! Blessed Christmas ! Let the glad hosannas ring

On the morrow from the belfries at the coming of the king:
Let the banners be exalted, and around the altar shrine
Let the emblems of " Forever " in their living beauty twine;
As the Christ came to the shepherds in the holÿ days of yore,
So He cometh to our dwellings if we open but the door;
Aye, he cometh, e'en the dayspring ! and the *gloria* from on high,

With the song-burst of hosanna ! shall re-echo to the sky.

But we must not be forgetful that we have forevermore,
With outstretching hands among us the humble and the poor—
Shivering forms and pallid faces at the cottage window pane,
Starting back in helpless terror at the beating of the rain;
Nor forget that, of all others, 'tis the time for men to try
The strength of that religion that they claim to travel by;
To solve the weighty question ere the pleader shall depart,
If the heart is in the pocket—or, the pocket in the heart.

AMONG THE MEMORIES.

I.

WHERE proud Rock Rimmon's lofty prow
Uplifts above the vale below,
I stood, one day, with outward look
Tow'rd river bank and winding brook,
Where oft of yore my feet had trod
With gamey hook and fishing-rod.
With flanking hills that interlock
Far to the south rose Castle Rock,
With lonely pine no longer crowned
To greet the trav'ler homeward bound.
Far to the east lay Scokorat
With stony fields and pastures that,
As one might think—if as of yore—
Might poorer make who owned the more.

Westward, with finger tow'rd the sky,
St. Peter's lifted up on high,
Where good old Deacon Kinney ran
His gospel train on ancient plan;
Who—if not banning quite the rest—
Still held his road for safety best;
E'en claiming apostolic line
To prove preemptive right divine;
Across the realm where mortal dwell,
To run without a "parallel."
Can be forgot that proudest hour
When I, within St. Peter's door—
Promoted from the "common herd"—
Became a teacher of the word,
With Susie B.—dear little lass—
A member of my Sabbath-class?
Ah, me! but I can see her now
As when did she, with arching brow,

Her teacher teach—the cunning elf—
To “love thy neighbor as thyself.”
What then I taught of churchly lore
Within that old St. Peter’s door
I cannot tell you, since, indeed,
I cannot e’en recall the creed;
Harsh things then learned of Providence
I’ve been unlearning ever since.

Beneath the shadow of the Rock
Where Curtis led his wand’ring flock,
Against a pine background of green
Truth’s democratic church was seen—
Despising all despotic form;
Self-poised and in its self-hood firm,
Its friendly arms extending wide
In name of Him the Crucified.
A living protest hath it been
Against the great encroaching sin
Which shuts and barricades the door
That leadeth to the evermore:—
That makes the truth to form the creed,
Not creeds the truth; e’en, to the needs
Of growing light—however strange
To ancient eyes—that dares a change;
Nor bishop, synod, or conclave
E’er asketh what it must believe;
A free church in the freest land
That lies beneath creative hand.

Eastward, as turning in my search,
I miss a quaint old-fashioned church
Whose paintless, high-back seats were made
The sport of every boyish blade;—
With service end, whose gallery floor,
Was strewed with birch and apple core!
Methinks I hear its lusty prayers
Re-echo yet along the years,

Beginning in a whisper low—
Upmounting by degrees and slow—
Till at the last, with thunder tone
They take by storm th' eternal throne.

Blunt spoken Gilyard's frequent voice,
Proclaiming of life's better choice;
Good Uncle Jerrod's solemn strain,
Repeating o'er and o'er again:—
Scenes such as these my thoughts did fill,
As looking tow'rd old Chusetown hill,
I wondered (if those sainted ones
Still keep an eye upon their sons).
How doth accord—to spirit gaze—
The temples of our modern praise?
The costly pane—the lofty spire—
The preacher raking down his "fire!"
E'en sweeping from perdition's door,
That hideous word "forevermore!"
Or, at least, when human sight
Fails to discern God's purpose, quite,
That rules the creeds and dogmas out
And to the sinner gives the doubt?
Brave sons of faith, that through the night
Faced ever to some morning light—
Not seen but hoped for to the end—
Before thy memoried shrines I bend
To pay with heart and tongue and pen,
That homage due to honest men.

II.

Yet other scenes and visions came—
As from a pit of bitterest shame—
That made me doubt, as there I stood
In blank amaze, if God was God!
I turned my glass. Along the vale
A host of spectred children pale,
With anguished faces thin and weird

Flashed on the eye and disappeared!
Behind—a bacchanalian crowd—
With tottering gait and grizzly browed—
Came straggling through the palsying land
From low saloon and tavern stand—
Men turned to brutes. And then I saw,
Beneath the blighting hand of law,
Farms, that from sire to son had come,
Mortgaged and lost in dens of shame;
Then peeping in at the barroom door
Where loitering fools ran up their score,
I saw the curse of Humphreysville
Bend o'er the old stone tavern till

The shadows fled. The vale beneath,
The landlord slept the sleep of death;
Ill winds, that by the maxim should,
While blighting some, waft others good,
On all they touched brought down the curse,
Nor could be told who fared the worse;—
For death is death, what cometh then
Lies not within our mortal ken.

As sped away each shadowy ghost,
Came up the vale a bannered host
Regalia clad—red, blue and white;
And “as the water drops unite
And blend in one,” I heard them say—
“So may we blend, till washed away
From land to land, from main to main,
Shall be for aye, rum’s hideous stain.”
E’en as I looked, in nook and glen,
Where’er were found abodes of men,
The sobered hand, unthrifty late,
Put up the fence and hanged the gate.
The cot took on a fresh attire;
Unwonted fuel fed the fire;
Into the attic’s refuse bags

The children shed their filthy rags;
And as they donned their prouder clothes,
Glad mothers quite forgot their woes;
While on the tongue of thankfulness—
As saviours rose the names of Bliss
And Swift and Losee—passed away—
With others, yet, that here to-day,
Against the fiend and all his hordes,
Still live to hurl indignant words.

III.

Change rules the hour. What was, is not;
What is, the morrow hath forgot.

Though true it be, that cottage door
Still opens where it did of yore,
Yet not as to our youthful eyes,
Our ancient home we recognize.
In weather brown of chestnut wood,
A story and a half it stood—
Plain, unpretentious like the men
And women that it sheltered then;
Its floors were bare, its chimneys wide—
With generous cuttings well supplied
By after school-hours evening chore
From oak or walnut at the door.
Beneath the wide moss-hanging eaves—
Half hidden 'mong the maple leaves—
The swallow raised her twittering brood,
Its nests the color of the wood,
While chipmonk ran along the fence
Safe—in his worthless innocence—
Unless, perchance, by wanton stone,
Of thoughtless urchin overthrown.

Two story now, the cottage stands,
While from its either side expands
Bay windows whose indwelling flowers

Vie with the splendors of the floors.
 No longer is the clang of loom
 Heard in the upper attic room;
 No more the prancing, pattering hoof
 Of watery steeds upon the roof
 Lulls us into half dreamy swoon
 On some dull Sunday afternoon—
 Afar from churchly worshippers—
 Among the mint and hazel burs.
 The stone wall where the chipmonk race
 Built year by year its dwelling place,
 Along the garden line of yore,
 Hath felt the impulse of the hour,
 And in its stead, the paling high
 In various pattern, meets the eye—
 As if to show that 'twere designed
 That use and beauty should be joined.

IV.

The train sweeps on. We're growing old;
 E'en as we speak some wing doth fold:
 Some moment bright hath passed away
 And th' morrow is the great to-day.

So, lovely vale, with yearning eyes
 And heart of tenderest sympathies,
 Along thy pictured hills I range,
 To find but faces new and strange.
 My boyhood's friends, where have they fled?
 I listen, but their welcome tread
 Comes not upon my later path;
 Save here and there, some one that hath—
 By dint perchance of hardier stock—
 Survived the spoiler's roughest shock.

V.

Somehow it came, I know not how,
 While looking on that vale below

That many a pleasant scene came back—
 Across the long half-buried track—
 Of strolling bands for serenade,
 Where shrieking flute and viol played
 Beneath the great eyed summer moon,
 Such antics both with time and tune!

Ah, William H. and Charlie D.,
 And Edward F. and Thomas G.,
 How is it friends? Once more in line,
 Let's twang the string for Auld Lang Syne!
 Oh, yes, I know, from years that rolled,
 The flute is hoarse—the string is old;
 Perchance it will not bear the strain
 Of concert pitch; and yet, again—
 Though forced to take a lower key—
 Let's try our old time minstrelsy.

The girls? Dear me I cannot tell
 Just now where may the creatures dwell;
 Afar from earth and earthly things,
 Some well I know have taken wings,
 Yet, after all, may gather near,
 If once our ancient tone they hear;
 Come, twang the strings; Tom draw your flute;
 There! give us now the starting note!

* * * * * *

Hurrah! by jove we played it fine,
 For Auld Lang Syne—for Auld Lang Syne.

THE VOYAGE OF LIFE.

LONG years ago—to-night they're five and twenty,
A maiden stood with me upon the strand,
Where flattering hope, with promises in plenty,
Wrote out our future in the golden sand.

Each surging wave, as it came dashing leeward,
Had some sweet story of its own to tell,
Of love's fair islands that were lying seaward,
On which young fancy loveth aye to dwell.

Casting our eyes across the leaping waters,
In the far distance flashed a tiny sail;
Now 'gainst the sky, now hidden by the breakers,
Onward it came, low bending to the gale.

Wond'ring, we gazed upon the airy vision,
Which scarcely seemed to touch the azure sea;
And much we questioned what might be its mission,
And who the fearless mariner might be.

Onward and landward, nearer and yet nearer,
Marking its white track o'er the watery wild,
Steady it came, till vision getting clearer,
Firm at the helm we saw a little child.

"Now hail," said the maiden, so, cheerily, I shouted,
Mariner thy name? and to what port dost thou sail?
"Captain Cupid, and to Wedlock," came reply so sweet I
doubted

If 'twas not but the echo of some spirit of the gale.

"To Wedlock?" I repeated, that is strange, good Captain
Cupid,

Come, tell me, if thou can'st, where port like that may be?
Then up spoke the blushing maiden, "Why, don't you know;
you stupid,

'Tis out among those islands—Love's Islands of the sea."

I took the hint (as you would), she'd planned an expedition,
 And I must try to join it, that was plain to see;
 The love tide seldom waiteth, so at once I got permission
 To go with her a-searching for Love's Islands of the sea.

"All aboard," now said the captain, so we walked the plank
 together,

And we took up life's great journey without parley or delay;
 And our bark has never foundered, tho' we've had some heavy
 weather,

And the years, though five and twenty, find us still upon the
 way.

INDIAN WELL.

AH! here it is, the very crag
 That jutteth out above the pool
 Of limpid waters, sweet and cool,
 From which outbends the birchen snag,
 Whereon we sat that autumn day,
 And talked and dreamed the hours away.

'Twas years ago—I dare not think
 How many quite; indeed, to-day,
 With wrinkled brow and head of gray,
 As here I stand upon the brink
 Above the pool, I only know
 'Twas many, many years ago.

She was a maiden, brave and true,
 Fair as a fawn, and sweet as fair;
 E'en ocean's pearls are not more rare
 Than such as she, whom angels knew
 And guarded well, so aught of shame
 Ne'er soiled the whiteness of her name.

And I,—but wherefore should I name
 Myself, except the tale to tell?
 Too old to heed the magic spell
 That set's the youthful heart aflame,
 I yet confess what seemed to me
 An angel walked that day with me.

E'en now, indeed, when disenthralled
 From worldly cark and care, there seems
 To flit sometimes across my dreams,
 As 'twere—unbidden, and uncalled,
 Some angel form—it may be hers;—
 Such do return as messengers

Of better things that should be known—
 To touch the cheek with soft caress—
 To whisper words of tenderness—
 To lift each burthen of our own
 And by their min'string presence lead
 The pathways that our feet must tread.

II.

Upon a rock where we reclined
 With patient toil some words were hewn:
 I wonder if the faithful stone
 Hath kept the record still in mind?
 Aye! as I live! The very spot!
 And here the words, "Forget me not!"

And just below, one little word
 From out the mosses I recall:
 Six letters—"JENNIE" that is all.
 Mine own hath vanished with the herd
 Of common names, nor left a trace
 Of aught but cold unlettered space.

For rocks and men come to decay,
 High though the mountain turret climb,
 Beneath the blast of Father Time.

Sand after sand must drop away,
For 'tis the fate of rocks and men
To find at last the level plain.

Oh mossy crag, and echoing cave !
That hedge about yon shadowy pool;
Tell me if somewhere 'neath the cool
And dimpled surface of the wave
Are not the faces that I know
Were mirrored there, so long ago ?

For as the waters wheel and curl
Within and out the shadowy cave,
Sometimes upon the limpid wave—
Amid the foaming, mazy whirl,—
A flash reveals—I know not what,
Yet which enchains me to the spot.

Aye, as I gaze, the snowy spray
Takes human shape, and girlish form;
That points me with a fairy arm
Toward the rock, whereon that day
She wrote the words my chisel cut,—
“ Forget me not,” “ forget me not.”

Ye sloping banks and boulders gray
That skirt this sweetly memoried stream,
Oh, tell me, is it all a dream ?
Or comes the maiden here to-day ?
Hark ! there's a footstep:—it must be !—
Oh, darling, wilt thou speak to me ?

BEAUTIFUL LEAVES.

OUT in the fields, one autumn day,
Dreaming the beautiful hours away,
Two there were that with me strayed,
Through the meadow and through the glade:
One a matron, the other a maid—
Gathering leaves.

Beautiful leaves of many a hue,
Fair as ever a mortal knew:
Golden yellow and russet brown,
Bits of flame from the maple crown,
Softy, silently shimmering down—
Beautiful leaves.

Round and round, with many a turn,
Under the fringe of feather fern;
In and out of their cool retreat,
Whirled the waters, clear and sweet,
Bearing their burthens to our feet—
Of beautiful leaves.

Time was when, in the April days,
Under the soft and nurturing rays,
Ere the buttercups did appear,
First were they to give us cheer,
Clothing the nakedness of the year
With beautiful leaves:

Leaves that never deserted the bough
Till their juices ceased to flow;
Till they had gathered the color and glow
Of ripened age; then, duty done,
Under the mild October sun,
Fell the beautiful leaves.

So we gathered and bore them away,
Children of light, for another day;

And, as cheerily home we strayed,
 Through the meadow and through the glade,
 I, with the matron and the maid—
 With our beautiful leaves.

I thought of the autumn days to come,
 When all must travel the journey home;
 And silently in my heart I prayed,
 That ever, this matron and this maid,
 Might be, in the glory of life arrayed,
 Like the beautiful leaves.

Travelling down the realms of shade,
 Not as those that are sore afraid,
 But like one with never a trace
 Of naught but cheerfulness on the face,
 Hastening home at the end of the race,
 With beautiful leaves.

Written all over with dutiful deeds
 For humanity's suffering needs,
 Bearing the record of useful lives,
 Faithful daughters and loving wives,
 Summing the grain of their harvested sheaves,
 On the beautiful leaves.

OLD AND NEW YEAR.

THE old year out, the new year in;—
 The sweeping hours go by;—
 I tremble at the ticking clock—
 I cannot tell you why;
 Tick, tick, tick, tick,
 I cannot tell you why;
 For though with every pulse and swing,
 My castle wall may rock,

Yet what with me hath that to do
 Oh tireless, busy clock?
True every step is one the less
 Adown the steep incline;
But what to me, oh busy clock?
 Eternity is mine.

I sit within my castle wall;
 The midnight train is due:
Hark! clear the track! the whistle shrieks,
 Behold, I bring the new:—
And hill and dale re-echo back,
 Behold I bring the new!
'The old year out, the good it brought
 Is ours forevermore!
'The new year in, thrice happy he
 Who addeth to the store.
And though the grim, remorseless clock
 Marks off th' expiring hours
Till e'en shall come three score and ten,
 Eternity is ours.

The old year out, the new year in;
 Within my castle wall,
I patient wait, or soon or late,
 The hour that comes to all.
I will not fear if but each year
 Good seed hath fairly sown,
With silver hairs, that choking tares
 Will rob me of mine own;
 That soon or late
I shall not reap mine own.

THE TOWN ON THE HILL.

THERE'S a town on the hill where the streets are o'er-
grown

With weeds that neglect and the breezes have sown:—

Where the houses are thatched with the grass and the flowers,
And the minutes within are as long as the hours:—

Where the hearthstone hath never a spark or a flame,
And night unto night is forever the same.

Of the people that dwell in this town on the hill,
It is little I know and but little can tell:

This only, in fact, from the region about,
They are seen to go in, but they never come out.

Yet a faith that is more than a faith, I've thought,
Sweet faces, oft times, to my vision hath brought

Of the dear ones that seem to be loving us still,
Though they went from our sight at the town on the hill.

The gates of this city—so white and so tall,
Are open for any—are open for all:

For pride hath no place with the people who dwell
In the echoless halls of this town on the hill;

Where the soldier that enters, must lay down his sword,
And the miser no longer his treasure can hoard:

For the sword and the treasure goes ever to rust,
In this empire of peace, in this realm of the dust.

“Threescore and ten?” Oh, yes, but they pass—
The swift mounted years—like a flame in the grass,

That rides at the front on the whirl of the wind,
To leave but the wreck of some glory behind!

There is ever a house in this town on the hill,
For the people below in the village to fill:—

A tick of the clock, and the sound of their feet,
Is lost in the depths of its silent retreat.

Is it strange that I ask if this city of death
Hath a tomb for the thought, as it hath for the breath?—

If this living and loving and hoping must be,
As a ship that is lost in the depths of the sea?

But the answer I get in these moments of gloom,
Is the “dust unto dust” at the mouth of the tomb!

And I shout in my anguish—defiant of God,
“As I live let me die as becometh a clod!”

One day, I stood close to the portal, alas!
As it opened, a while, for my darling to pass;

I thought to go in but the warder said “Nay,”
The time is not yet; but I caught, far away,

As I peered through the shadows a glimmer of light—
As it were at the end of some cave of the night;

And I heard a sweet strain, as of triumph and song,
That rippled the depths of that cavern along!

Which I took for a sign that despite of my fears,
E’en thus it would prove at the end of the years:—

That a star beam of hope yet would come through the gloom,
To lead and to guide through the night of the tomb.

With courage renewed, then, I took up my staff,
And the ages of darkness I met with a laugh!

And I said to misfortune, ha! ha! but the ill
Of thy shafts cannot reach to the town on the hill.

BEAVER BROOK.

I.

THROUGH a valley of peace, in our latter day,
With laugh and with song, as in merry play,
A beautiful streamlet pursued its way
From nook to nook,
Where the fisher delighted to cast his hook,
For many a year
Known far and near
In the country about as Beaver brook.

II.

The winter was past and the spring had come
With the greening grass to the cottage home,
While down the valley, its galloping team,
On its peaceful way, drove the tiny stream,
Now stopping a while by the way, at length,
To turn some mill with a gathered strength—
Some mystic wheel,
For the transmutation of mind to meal.
To this, our land,
If heaven had sent, with a lavish hand
Of hope and cheer,
One might have hoped to have found it here.

III.

A rural rat that had felt, no doubt,
The stinging shot of some gunning lout
Of a burgher stout,
With a joyful look
At the swollen brook,
On that Wednesday morn from his door looked out,
And thus to himself he spake: said he,
Aha! aha! but these folks below—
So strong in their strength, I will quickly show
How a simple rat, though but weak and small,
With a deluge of waters can sweep them all
Into the sea.

IV.

To the lake above, then, he sallied forth,
And he sapped and mined through the bank of earth
That barred the waters, till round the wall
They whirled and whirled to its final fall;
And the great mad stream, as in mighty wrath,
Through that smiling vale left a desert path.
With the thunder peal and the lightning flash,
On the startled ear came the roar and crash
Of rushing waters to men below,
That told in a moment, a tale of woe—
That bore away as its ghastly spoil,
The fruitful gain of their years of toil.
Onward and downward the waters hurl,
Dashing and crashing, they wheel and whirl,
While floating rocks and uprooted trees
Are tossed, like feathers, before the breeze,
And amid the roar
Are scattered in fragments along the shore.

V.

For greening lawns, upon every hand
The waters leave but of mud and sand.
Fortunes are wrecked, and the homes of pride
Are scarred and marred by the angry tide.
But amid it all, with a binding force,
Comes the thankful thought that it was no worse,—
To the cottage door
That the flood came not at the midnight hour.

VI.

Through a valley of peace to a later day,
Still laughing along as in merry play,
That beautiful streamlet pursues its way,
From nook to nook,
Where the fisher may sport with his morning hook;
Yet for many a year
Shall the people hear
Of the terrible pranks of Beaver brook.

THE PICTURE UPON THE WALL.

HERE are two little lambkins infolded—
I need not, I'm sure, tell you where;

Enough that the lambkins are folded
And guarded with tenderest care.

From a picture the wall hath in keeping,
A mother looks pleadingly down,
With her great loving eyes, that, unsleeping,
Keepeth watch, as it were, o'er her own.

And I see her again as I knew her,—
A bright little maiden and fair,—
Ere the breath of the night wind that slew her,
Had dampened the braids of her hair.

There's a triumph of love, and a bridal;
A cottage, with love on the throne;
A proud little mother—the idol
Of him that had made her his own.

There are years that flow on, like a river,
Unruffled by tempest or breeze;
There are hands that upbuild—to receive her—
The halls of ambition to please.

* * * * *
And then comes the night of our sadness;
There's a new step that's heard in the hall;
A chime, and a wedding of gladness;
The great eyes look down from the wall.

While a low voice goes upward, and pleading
With Mercy, before the great throne,
That whom shall the lambkins be leading,
Will help her to watch o'er her own;—

So that—as their feet shall move onward,
Kind motherhood's face to recall—
As the lambkins grow upward and sunward,
Two pictures shall hang on the wall.

MISCELLANEOUS.

NEW ENGLAND.

NEW ENGLAND, thou soul of the nation! its conscience,
its keeper, the seal—

On the scroll of its honor, forever, in our hearts at thy
presence we kneel!

With thy Longfellow, Whittier and Lowell—the godhead
triune of thy song!

With thy Garrison, Phillips and Sumner—the chain-breaking
foe of the wrong!

With thy Webster, and Choate, and Parker, thy Thoreau and
Emerson, e'en

Thy thoughts as the flow of a river make the hills of humanity
green.

Thy sons have been ever the sages; tall souls that, outrising
the night,

Have caught at the earliest dawning—the law from some orient
height,

And have hasted them down from the mountain, like Moses of
old with a sword,

And the tablets of granite engraven, and a “hear ye, for thus
saith the Lord!”

And, yet, there is something to hope for—a glory not yet quite
attained;

In the rock by the wayside, New England, is an angel of
beauty enchained.

E'en the angel of Christ in the human: the perfection of right
that is might!

And may God haste the chisel of progress that bringeth that
glory to light.

HON. JOSEPHUS BROWN.

"The Hon. Josephus Brown, from Beanville, is stopping at the City Hotel."—*City Item*.

WELL, yes, I'll have to own it, square: I sent that item in,
Not that I thought of my affairs that you would care a
pin;

But, now a days, folks get in print that mean to make a show,
As gin'ral this, or kurnel that, or hon'able so and so.

And though it was a weakness, square, as I must freely own,
I thought I'd like to see that way, my name, Josephus Brown.

I'm growin' old and, mebbe, square, that you will think a fool;
But Jane is scollardly enough—she kept the village school.

"Jane?" That's my wife. You knêw her, square—she that
was Janie Towne;

Of course you haint forgot the day she married 'Cephas Brown?
(Yes, I am he. How are you, Joe?—) But that is all gone
by;

One had to be the loser, Joe: 'twas either you or I.

But, Jane, poor girl! sometimes I think she did not do her
best;

Though when I've said as much to her, she's answered that
she "guessed

She knew her business;"—bless her heart! I ne'er could make
her own

That ever she did rue the day she married 'Cephas Brown.

We've talked it o'er a thousand times, I always felt afraid
That I had made too hard a bed for that dear little maid,
Who had but to have spoke the word and gold was at com-
mand—

And high estate, and rank, perhaps, the proudest in the land.
And if while drudging out the days of our hard country life,
Has sometimes come a yearning thought about some city wife,
That never spun an ounce of wool, or e'en that ever knew,
But that upon some tree or shrub fresh eggs and butter grew;
If she has thought what might have been when hardships
bore her down

Till weakness came, she ne'er were blamed by me, Josephus
Brown.

But no; to her philosophy for man or womanhood:
According to the strength to bear, some hardship is for good;
"Gold is not wealth;" sometimes I think she says it for my
sake—

"Who loses most may win the most of all that is at stake
Of any real good in life: than discord's ax, superb,
Far better, in some rural cot, contentment's humble herb!"
So saith my brave, good wife that is—she that was Janie
Towne—

Who left so much that might have been, for me, Josephus
Brown.

But, square, I've wandered off a bit from saying what I meant,
Which was that when to put in print my name to you I sent,
We'd talked and talked the matter o'er—that's me, you know,
and Jane,—

And both agreed, though some might think us not a little vain,
That since I once the honor had to "represent" our town,
Some right had I, with H-o-n. to write Josephus Brown.
I thought, myself, that E-s-q. was all the case would bear;
But Jane, she said that was a plume that any fool could wear;
The other weren't so common like, though sometimes out of
place,

In helping some infamous chap to tide o'er some disgrace.
But now I come to think on't, square, 'twas foolish like, I own,
To add pretentious prefix, such, to plain Josephus Brown.

For honors are'nt so easy, square—the gospel sort, I mean,
That one can buy enough to cleanse a soul that is'nt clean.

And though sometimes my wife may think that I'm the best
of men,
Yet, looking back through all the years of my three score and
ten,
There's much I find to make me e'en the "H-o-n." disown,
And be content to write my name, as plain Josephus Brown.

MARRY A GENTLEMAN.

SAID a beautiful maid, one day to me,
"Marry a gentleman! why of course!
What do you take me for, said she,
A goose? or worse?"

"What were the good of a couple of maids
As running mates on the track of years?
As well to rivet two nether blades
For a pair of shears!"

"Of course," said I, "but you see, you see,
To put it as plainly as I can,
I meant but this, that your love should be
A noble man!"

"But noble men are not plenty now,"
With puzzled look, said the little maid;
"For such I would have too far to go,
I am much afraid."

Nay, not so far as may be supposed;
Nobility dwelleth in every land—
Though not in the outward garb disclosed,
Or the jeweled hand.

It bears no sceptre—it wears no crown—
Nor vaunts itself upon others' deeds,
With heart as humble as hands are brown,
Wherever leads

The surest path to the truest life,
Will now, as ever since time began,
Be found in search of a loving wife,
Some gentleman,—

Who lives to love, and who loves to live,
That earth be better for him, indeed,
Who asketh no gift that he will not give
To another's need.

And so to the maiden I said, "you see,
To put it as plainly as I can,
I meant but this, that your love should be,
A gentleman."

THE BOYCOTT.

DOWN from the hills on a marketing day,
Came Farmer John with a load of hay,
At a stalwart price that he wished to sell.
So he skirmished the village about until
He came to the dwelling of Laborer Jim—
A workman of his, and he said to him:
"A cow you have got, and a cow must eat,
And I have some hay that is good and sweet;
My wants they are many, my purse is low;
I'll sell you the food for your hungry cow
At forty dollars the single ton,
And not a cent cheaper," said Farmer John.

Says Laborer Jim, "But the price is too high;
It is true that my cow she must eat or die;
But you know that in market per ton, to-day,
For thirty good dollars there's plenty of hay.
My income is small, and upon my word,

To give you ten dollars I cannot afford.
 If you ll not take the thirty, why then away,—
 You can 'git up and git' with your load of hay."

"But that will not do," said old Farmer John;
 "You must give me the price that I ask per ton,
 Or a trade's commission on you shall wait,
 And the price you must pay we will arbitrate.
 Demanding your books, we will scan the amount
 That goes to your daily expense account;
 We will peep in your pantry, and cellar, too,
 And say what you can or you cannot do;
 And mind! The expenses, at so much per day,
 For the arbiters' time you will have to pay,
 Or the fiat will issue that downs your house,
 And giveth your cow but as nothing to browse.
 We'll boycott the butcher that bringeth your meat
 And the shoeman that covers your children's feet.
 Nay, more; but unless you my price advance,
 We'll boycott your cousins and all your aunts;
 In short, and forever while any remains
 To share in the stock of your beggarly veins,
 We'll punch, and we'll pinch them, from day unto day,
 If you give not the price for my beautiful hay."

Then uprose Toiler Jim, and said he, "As a man
 I will stand by my manhood as long as I can;
 My labor is worth, or in winter or spring,
 As you say, Farmer John, only what it will bring';
 Then, as it is worth in the markets to-day,
 For that, and that only, I'll purchase your hay;
 But never a cent (though I starve, Farmer John)
 Will I give the footpad with the boycotting gun."

* * * * *

'Tis a homely old adage quite often in use,
 That "sauce for the gander is sauce for the goose."

If the toiler for wages may use the "boycott"
 For getting what otherwise cannot be got,
 Then, to market their wares and their profits enchain,
 Why should not the "bosses" be given a chance?
 Let's work out the problem. To cure up the ills
 That menace the mansion as well as the mills,
 On the back of whatever displeases—why not?
 Let us lay on the lash, with the snapper "boycott."

But there's one thing methinks after all that we'll find,
 And it is that the blindest of men are the blind
 Who think they can see that in order to thrive
 They've only to "fiat" two and two to be five.

LET HIM ALONE.

THESE be brave words, and noble as brave.
 It is time for rebuking the pitiful knave
 That—saving himself—would keep others at sea,
 To perish in sight of the "flag of the free."

Poor Johnny Chinaman, let him alone!
 He comes to us asking not even a bone
 That he pays not in full for; no pauper is he,—
 He asks but permission to "washee, wash-ee."

Shod with "canal boats," and under his hat
 A "pigtail," you say? Well, sir, what of that?
 Or Miss, if you please? The pigtail of Chang
 Is as "lovely" perhaps as your idiot "bang."

Irishman! where is your deed for the air
 That you take, while to others refusing a share?
 Refuge is this for the poor and oppressed;
 Have you not found it so, friend, in the past?

Yankee! and where is *your* title to hold
 The land that you stole from the red man of old?
 Might maketh not Right! "The Chinese must go!"
 Is the cry of the demagogue—decency's foe.

Hark ye, my neighbors! The "Chinee" shall STAY!
 So long as our laws he shall chose to obey;
 When this he does not 'twill be time then, you know,
 With the "sand lots" to echo, the "Chinese must go,"

Poor Johnny Chinaman! almond-eyed son
 Of a nation that stands with its feet to our sun,
 Do not denounce him, though your mothers at home,
 Should not have enough "washee" to keep you in rum.

Let him alone! he is harmless enough;
 Let him alone, Mr. Bummer or Rough!
 If *cleanliness* next unto godliness be,
 A mission to *you* hath this "heathen Chinee."

TO AN INVALID MOTHER.

WHY steals the silent tear, mother,
 Adown thy snowy cheek?
 Alas! those deep-drawn sighs, mother,
 A sorrowed heart bespeak.
 Dark clouds of deep and gath'ring gloom
 Come shadowing o'er thy brow,
 And thy voice which once rang clear in song,
 Is hushed in sadness now.

Sometimes from thy blue eye, mother,
 A fleeting smile will gleam,
 Yet most are they like tears, mother,
 So faint, so sad their beam.

Once 'twas not thus; the time was when
Thy all of life was gay,
Ere sorrow's clouds had veiled the sky
Of young life's summer day.

Thy voice in praise, I've heard, mother,
Ere th' lark proclaimed the dawn,
As hand in hand we roamed, mother,
The dew-bespangled lawn;
And oft at the morning hour
We breathed the perfumed air,
Thou did'st teach my infant knee to bend
In humble, grateful prayer.

But now there is a change, mother,
Disease thy limbs have claimed;
And months and years thou'st suffered, mother,
Yet hast thou not complained.
And when I mark the rising tear,
Unbidden, dim thine eye,
I know that sorrow, care and pain
Call forth each tear, each sigh.

I would that blooming health, mother,
Again might kiss thy cheek,
And many happy days, mother,
Would I for thee bespeak.
But if it is by heaven ordained
That thou must suffer still,
Mother! by Him be thou sustained,
"Who doeth all things well."

“A MAN IS A MAN.”

NOW hark ye, my friend! it's a blunder ye're makin';
 Disgrace does not come from a nation or name:
 'Tis the deed that must judge us,—the truth I'm spakin',—
 And only the deed that can bring us to shame.

What matter, me boy, though our dust may be taken
 From Erin's green isle, or this land of the west?
 A man is a man,—it's the truth I am spakin',—
 Who liveth and doeth the thing that is best.

Crisp though his hair, and sooty his face is;
 Born to the spade or the purple so fine;
 The King is his Father! and He by his graces,
 To each giveth birthright as “prince of the line.”

Ashamed of the land of your fathers? Forbid it!
 Ye army of martyrs that live in its song;
 It is hasty ye were, or ye could not have said it;
 The heart it was right, but the head it was wrong.

Ashamed of the land of O'Connel and Emmet?
 Of Meagher, and Mitchell, and Matthew, indeed?
 Then, aye, let the child of its mother disclaim it,
 And blush for the milk that hath nurtured and fed!

Oh, Erin! brave Erin! bright gem of the ocean!
 Though tuned is thy wild harp to sorrowing strains;
 Yet ne'er may thy children so lack in devotion,
 As to blush for the blood that is flooding their veins.

Then harkee, my friends, it's a blunder ye're makin';
 Disgrace cannot come from a nation or name;
 'Tis the deed that must judge us,—the truth I am spakin',—
 And only our deeds that can bring us to shame.

So give us your hand, now,—begorra, I mane it!—
 Let's build up a bridge o'er this “chasm,” and then
 With our oaks and our shamrocks, we'll strive to maintain it,
 And work with each other like brothers—and men!

IN MEMORIAM.

DR. AMBROSE BEARDSLEY.

LIKE children at play on the ocean strand,
We build up our castles of shifting sand:

The tide comes in, and the tide goes out,
And where we have builded is left in doubt;

We measure our lands and we count our gold,
And we clutch our possessions with frantic hold;

We bend to our tasks like the galley slave,
Till we stand on the brink of the yawning grave!

And this is life! Of its shifting sand
Must we build, forever, with childish hand?

Is there nothing to stand, as the solid rock,
Forever defying the tempest's shock?

Must we grovel and grope among sordid things,
With the rustle about us of soaring wings?

Go stand with me at yon new made grave,
Where sleepeth the friend of the loyal brave,

And the friend of the lame and the halt and blind,
And the lowest and poorest of human kind,—

Whose hand was full of restoring balm
And whose life was as sweet as a morning psalm!

Go ask of him, as he hovereth o'er,
If the castles he built on this troubled shore,—

Though they left him poor as to shining gold,
Were not in the skies as a wealth untold?

Loyal and true—from my early years
In the days of joy and the days of tears—

I knew him well, even to the end,
As brother, adviser, physician and friend.

Where duty called it was his to go,
Through tempest whirl, or the biting snow;

Nor counselled he as to duty's course—
Of his own good ease, or his patient's purse.

It matters but little if low or tall
His graven shaft, or if none at all;

For granite must crumble and bronze will rust;
But a life that is true cannot end in dust.

Love must be immortal. Hope cannot die,
Or God is a myth, and his wisdom—a lie

THE TROUBLE AT PODANK.

IT was regular meeting day of Podank's sewing circle:
Present the Scrimagers and Kranks, the Smilers and the
Smirkles,

With several ancient maidens, that, as models of propriety,
Had passed as 'mong the very best of Podank's church
society.

As usual on occasions when the guild had come together,
The first upon the docket was the subject of the weather;
And next a little baby talk, with turning conversation
Upon the "Master's vineyard" and the general situation.

* * * * *

The work commenced, and for a time, the knitting and the
sewing

Went smoothly on, though plain it was that trouble there was
brewing:

Somewhat as if somewhere beneath by dynamiter loaded—
Some hidden mine by wicked hand did wait to be exploded.

Miss Skinney and Miss Overgood sat crooning in a corner,
 As if it was a funeral hour and each was chiefest mourner;
 Across the room, and vis-a-vis, a younger generation
 Of Podank belles, of lovers, held a whispered conversation.

The matrons talked abstractedly, about the philanthropies:
 Of linens for the arctics and of woollens for the tropics;
 Or into contemplation took the Indians of Dacotah,
 While knitting socks and pretty things for babies out in Utah.

* * * * * * *

For years, the only public place for Podank's younger people
 To gather in a general way was underneath the steeple,
 Where to enjoy, as best they could, old Deacon Buncombe's
 prayin',
 Or Parson Lengthy's talk about the danger of delayin'.

But, lately, 'twas suggested by some people more progressive,
 That, for the youngsters, less restraint might sometimes be
 permissive;
 But just how far to give them rein, and hold them to propriety,
 Was something that was on the mind of Podank's church
 society.

One spoke of dancing as no harm if properly conducted—
 Another thought by "readin' rooms" to have the young
 instructed;
 While to employ them both, 'twere well, so thought good Peter
 Saterlee,
 Suggesting also smoking rooms and checker boards et cetera.

The subject had been wrestled with in prayerful meditation,
 The faithful pulpit, too, had mourned the risky situation;
 And yet, despite all warning words regarding church propriety,
 The project daily converts made from Podank's best society.

* * * * * * *

The clock upon the stroke of three cut short the skirmish
 rattle,
 When all, as if with one consent, fell into line of battle,

For backing up the heresy, or for its full suppression—
A subject that had been adjourned from last week's regular session.

The first to broach the subject was the spinster secretary,
With the remark that life was short and sorry was she, very,
To find immortal bein's (at some oldish people glancing,)
In Christian lands to justify the sinfulness of dancing.

Though there was something said about our *walk* and conversation,
To *dance* was there no one command in all God's revelation;
In fact to *run* the christian race was only recommended,
By them of old who followed Him that to the earth descended.

"Just think," said she, "of sinners foul with Adam's great transgression,
A waltzing up before the Lamb, in butterfly procession,
To get a pass for Canaan's land, instead of humbly falling,
Like worms and serpent's that they are, and to His presence crawling!"

Miss Skinner thought, while easy quite would be the bible showing,
That to his thirst for knowledge was Old Adam's trouble owing,
Yet she believed in books and sich, if prayerfully selected,
Though larnin' was too dearly bought with savin' grace neglected.

The book of Martyrs, Baxter's "Rest," with Bunyan, for example—

The Bible and some other sich to her mind would be ample;
While as for games and worldly plays, what need was there to add one?

Or build smoke houses for our youth when every farmer had one?

As for the dance some folks were now too frisky for their
calling,

E'en that, sometimes, she called no names—came pretty near
to falling;—

At which a matron quick upspoke, with something of glass
houses,

In which dwelt certain ancient dames who had'nt any spouses,

But ought to have if so and so, not sounding to their credit,
(Consarnin' what she would not name), was true as people
said it.

To which replied the ancient one with meekness of a martyr,
“If some folks knew the things I know about the deacon's
daughter,—”

“'Tis false,” upspoke the deacon's wife. “What's false?”
inquired the other.

“I hain't said nothin'.” “What is more, you darsen't,” screamed
the mother.

So raged a wordy battle then, each assailant getting bolder,
In which were mingled maidens old and matrons that were
older,—

With venom'd arrows never one a neighbor's weakness sparing,
Until had Podank's scandal all received a thorough airing,—
Until—and plainly was it seen, as one good soul expressed it,
That “sinful natur will crop out where never had we guessed
it.”

The circle was no longer whole; old friendships had been
broken,

And faith was lost in christian grace, by hasty words out-
spoken.

Each, charged to each (as if ashamed that any had begun it),
With bringing to their cause a shame, and went for cloak and
bonnet;

While I who tell the story wake, as from a curious dreaming,
To find the dancing sunbeams through my attic window
streaming.

I heard the summer bird and bee their joyfulness rehearsing—
The leaping squirrels in their glee of autumn feasts discoursing.

The flocks and herds upon the hills were galloping their
gladness,

While man, poor fool, sat down to croon about some ancient
badness,—

Somehow his own—and to devise some pious sort of shamming,
By which to blind the judgment eye and so escape a damning.

In reason's name, what if should not our prayer be all sedate-
ness?

Or if in it we fail to tell our father of His greatness?

Will He forget our common needs, despite His love abounding?

Will He withhold the morning sun,—the seasons from their
rounding?

Nay, is He not by far too great, against the seed of woman,
To take offence because, perchance, of errors that were human?

Than favoring souls that only in some outward forms adore
Him,

Will not who lives to manliness stand greater far before Him?

It must be so. And if for us shall heaven be worth the
winning—

That "heaven within," declared of old, why make not here
beginning?

By leading so the joyful path and upward so ascending,

That scarce we'll know when passing on, beginnings from the
ending.

WHAT THE FIRST ROBIN SAID.

ONE beautiful morning in early spring,
When hope was out on its shining wing,
As I lay in my couch, the welkin rang
With a song like this, which the robin sang!

“Twir-r-r, twir-r-r, chit chit chee!
Chur-r-r, chur-r-r, twit twit twee!
Chuck chuck chuck! and he sang it long,
And this was the theme of the singer’s song:

Here I am, here I am, friends, with you!
The frost is gone and the breezes blow
From softer climes, and I come, I come,
To seek me a place for my summer home.

Ha! but I’ll show you some pretty tricks!
I’ll get some clay and some tiny sticks,
And I’ll get some moss and a tuft of hair—
With a feather or two from here and there.

And, then, right here in this busy town
I’ll build me a nest in the maple crown,
Where soon will be found some eggs of blue,
As pretty as ever a mortal knew.

And where—in time—shall a wonder be—
As much a wonder to thee as me;
For I can’t quite tell, no more can you,
How cometh the chick in the egg of blue.

The shell will break and a callow form
Shall open its mouth for the canker worm
That I will bring from the apple spray,
At the rate of a hundred or more a day.

And there, in our nest—my mate and I—
We’ll teach our little ones how to fly;

And we'll send them out on their mission forth
To gladden with beauty and song the earth.

E'en more, we will charge them the whole year through,
That they stay, my friend, that they stay with you,
But I ask, in turn, that if—winter-bound—
Some chick of mine shall be hungry found,

And its "quick, quick, quick," at your door is heard,
I ask that you spread for the pleading bird
The feast of crumbs that you well can spare,
To keep it alive in the frosty air.

And more, I ask that the wretches' "fun,"
That seeketh its life with the deadly gun,
Shall be held for aye, to the end of time,
The thing that it is, but a shameful crime.

With a "quirr-r quirr-r quirr-r!" and a chee chee chee!"
The bird sped off to a neighboring tree,
While I, indeed, ere I left my bed,
Had noted the words that the robin said.

And I made response for the faithful bird,
That ever I'd utter a friendly word;
E'en, to my best, that I would defend,
From harm, poor robin, our winter friend.

AN EARLY FROST.

MY name is Frost; they call me John;
Perhaps you may remember
The call I made one night, upon
An evening in September—
The tenth, I think it was, you said,
As in the morning, surly,
You pointed out the tulip bed
And said I "came too early."

Ho! what a lively time that night
 Among the tender grasses!
I painted all the valley white,
 And up the mountain passes,
With brush in hand, and pallet, too,
 Of colors rich and mellow,
I set the forest all aglow
 With crimson and with yellow.
As through the crispy meadow grass,
 Her naked feet were falling,
How lightly tripped the dairy lass,
 Her charges gaily calling!
And how—as Bess and Brindle rose,
 With full and creamy pouches—
She stood to warm her ruddy toes
 Among the vacant couches!
I touched the saucy chestnut burr
 With nipping, icy wrenches,
And quick the squirrels laughing churr,
 Was heard among the branches.
Upon the fringing border hedge,
 I set my jewels flashing;
And all along the river edge
 My tiny ships were dashing.
The frost grape sweetened on the vine,
 As purple grew the bunches,
Whereon, at morn and eventime,
 The whirring pheasant lunches.
The air I gave a healthy glow,
 Which cleared the smoky hollow,
And sent the quicker blood to flow
 Through sallow cheeks, and yellow.
And then unto the stricken land,
 Where anxious hearts were waiting;
I hastened with my cooling hand
 The fever fiend abating.

And all along the southern coast,
I sped on wings of healing,
While thousands blessed the early frost,
That sent the demon reeling.

I brought the frightened exile back
Beside his altars glowing,
And set, again, the human tide,
In wonted channels flowing.
And none there were in all the land—
With angry look, and surly—
To point at me the fevered hand,
And say I “came too early.”

THE LOCKOUT BELL.

WHO was she? I cannot now quite tell you;
As a toiler with us at the mill
She came every day from the city,
As the sunbeams came over the hill.

Of her history naught could we gather,
Though, somehow, I think it was learned,
Of a sister, and younger, dependent
For bread on the wage that she earned.

She was called “Little Maggie, the spooler,”
Though small, did she manage to fill
The hearts, and to love overflowing,
Of all that did work in the mill.

One morning, in clouds came the snowflakes,
The tempest wild raved and shocked,
As, the tongue of the last bell ceasing,
The doors of the mill were locked.

"Absent " was marked on her record;
I knew that the lassie was ill,
Or had fallen somewhere in the snow drift,
That day on her way to the mill.

And so to the good John Downie,
A brawny stout lad, I said,
"Go thou quickly and seek for the maiden
By the wayside—alive or dead."

And the laddie went forth to his searching,
Until from a rounding drift,
His eyes saw a part of her mantle,
That had caught on a bramble lift.

Then, quick, from its cold white shrouding,
He lifted her helpless form,
And clasping it close to his bosom,
Strode home through the blinding storm.

The heart had not quite ceased beating;
So, laying her on the bed,
The maiden reviving, in terror,
Exclaimed, as she lifted her head:

"The bell! Hark the last belt is sounding!
The drift groweth deeper, and I—
Oh God! am locked out and forever
In the cold, oh, so cold! and to die!"

Then laying her back on the pillow
There came, in despite of the storm,
As it seemed, through the roof of my cabin,
A sunbeam that lighted her form,

Above which a white mist gathered,
That, taking on human guise,
Did follow the sunbeams upward
And on to the over skies.

You think as it pleases you, neighbor,
Of my story as something absurd,
But unless did my senses deceive me,
From the spirit departing I heard

This song, as it were, of rejoicing:
"I am free, I am free from the mill,
From the pitiless task of the master,
From the clang of the merciless bell.

"I am, I—little Maggie the spooler,
An immortal, to earth yet allied;
I am dead, yet alive! and about me,
Are the vanished that never have died.

"I have garments of richness and splendor,
I have jewels of beauty, and rare!
I can ride on the sunbeams, they tell me,
And visit from star unto star!

"To my need will be mansions uplifted;
To my wish will come answering boon;
I have life, and where life is eternal,
And the clock pointeth ever a noon.

"I have learned that for whom that is faithful—
For whom that is loving and true,—
For whom, that, as strength it is given,
Shall do what is given to do.

"Though the snows of the earth drift about them,
To hinder their way to the gate,
Shall no 'lock out' be found to confront them,
Because of a coming too late."

AN EASTERN APOLOGUE.

THESE is a story, somewhere, that is told
About some Rabbis in the days of old,
That in the market place did gather round
The loathsome carcass of a wretched hound,
That, stoned by urchins, and with scourges plied,
Had done what every cur must do—had died.

They talked the matter over, pro and con:
Who was his master, or if he had none;
A rope was round his neck—was he a thief?
Of sinning dogs, did he not look the chief?

Spurning the carcass with his sandalled foot,
Up-spake one Rabbi, "'tis a sorry brute!
And justly, doubtless, was it that he died.
'There's no good thing about him, e'en his hide
Is full of holes and would not bring a groat."
"Faugh!" said another, as he turned about,
"To my good nostrils doth he give offence—
Pray take him hence."

A gentle stranger of a kindly mien,
That, till the moment, had not there been seen,
Bent lowly down above the form beneath,
And said, "like pearls are that poor fellow's teeth,"
And vanished.

Upspake the Rabbis all, in underbreath,
"This must have been that man of Nazareth!
For surely none but him had ever found
A thing to praise in such a wretched hound."

OUR MODERN GIRLS.

I.

ACCOMPLISHED? Yes, the girls are that, as goes the
world to-day,

They dance and sing and flutter in the most delightful way;
But how about the duties that, within the kitchen door,
So kept the matrons busy in the good old days of yore?

'Tis childhood, now, or womanhood—there is no stage be-
tween;

The maid becomes "her ladyship" before she's seventeen,
To flirt and flutter on the stage of life's gay world about,
Or, on the sofa dream the dream of some last novel out.

I well remember, Tom, the day when, helpful to your side,
That sweet brown little maiden came to be your loving bride.
What if the only tune she played was on the spinning wheel,
Or, with the rat'ling dishes when was done the daily meal?

Without her daily labor, Tom, in many a helpful way—
To spin, and weave, and make and mend, where were your
lands to day?

And still, surrounded by her court, well caring for her own,
Is that true hearted maiden found upon her kitchen throne,

While her sweet girls with dainty feet parade the parlor
room

With trailing flounce to sweep the floor—though seldom with
the broom!

E'en granting all their boasted charms, without your helping
purse—

With which would any mortal chance the better, for the
worse?

II.

I don't go much on people, squire, that are too swift to find
Some weakness or some steps askew in our poor humankind:
In corners that can sit and chirp about the days of old,
Stone blind to all the glories that these latter days unfold.

You speak about the matrons, squire, that, in our earlier day,
Stood at the helpful labor wheel; I grant it as you say.
They were our helpmeets true, indeed, whose rounding day of
toil

Too often found its weary end beside the midnight oil.

But, that was ere from head to point had changed the needle's
eye—

Ere rapid seam and gusset could the Singer wheel supply—
Ere science, for assisting toil, had furnished us the means,
Or, ready baked, had Boston sent her brown bread and her
beans.

But here comes up the question as to what are life's demands;
If idleness be happiness, then, with enfolded hands,
To wait the benefactions of who reap of that they sow,
Or sit like beggars at the gate would be a heav'n below.

But since the fiat hath gone forth, by labor shalt thou eat
The bread of that existence that so makes the slumber sweet,
'Twere better that we teach them, squire, our boys and girls
the same,

That aimless indolence is but the beggary of shame:

That for their living in this world, upon the score of use
To others, as unto themselves, there should be some excuse.
To merely breathe is not to live; in slumber by the way
Whose breath hath run a hundred years may not have lived a
day.

The sire goes forth to daily toil though plenty fills his purse,
Because the current of his life he cannot now reverse;
The matron keeps her kitchen, though needless for to-day,
Content to find her happiness in her old-fashioned way.

Yet toil need not be drudgery—a strife without surcease,
Since to the reason-guided plow earth gives a fair increase:
E'en as the lillies, glory clad, along the valleys grow,
Nor toiling yet, nor spinning, to brighten earth below;
So, in life's rugged labor fields, our modern maids may hold,
Though menials less, as helpful place as did the girls of old.

THE GREENHORN INVASION.

THE greenhorn came down, like a wolf on the fold—
(If you've heard that before) say, an army untold
Of grasshoppers, nimble and hungry and bold;
Their boots were fourteens, and their locks were of gold.

They came on the boats and they came on the trains,
From the farm on the hillside, and up from the plains!
There were "bang"-headed maidens and shock-headed swains,
With dinner plate breast-pins, and "loud"-looking chains.

They swarmed on the pavement, they swarmed on the
"fence,"

And they drew from their pockets, with a "darn the expense,"
Their long hoarded shillings and slow gathered pence,
And went for the peanuts with gusto immense.

'Twas the Glorious Fourth! and the Britishers' rout
Was made the pretext for a regular "bout,"
Which, the papers all said would, without any doubt,
For the City of Elms, be the biggest thing out.
(And it was.)

To turn a bright penny, and help out the fete,
Each honest old cit. on the line of the street,
From his window or balcony put out his "seat,"
With "price fifty cents" the invader to beat,
(Which was cheap).

Though the same, the "invader" was slow for to see,
So he hung himself up on a neighboring tree,
Or stood on one leg, and awaited a chance
To put down the other, to make an advance
On the show in the street.

There were sogers and sogers! oh my! what a time!
Bakers' carts by the dozen, to eke out the line!
Gim cracks and odd notions,—cough syrups and spoons,

Old men and old wagons, antiques and buffoons;
"Fire injuns," and injuns without any fire,
(Save what they imbibed, and the day could inspire),
Marching straight on the war path, in leggin and sock,
Keeping time to the music of Grandfather's Clock;
Young girls and old maidens—too old, sir, to mention,
And a thousand things else claimed the greenhorn's attention.

Bean town was all out. There was Flora McFrill,
And Clarence Fitz-pup, from the "manse" on the hill;
With the lawyer O'Grabb;—e'en the parson was there,
With thin, gothic forehead, and long, flowing hair,
With his wife and his "nine," in the heat of the fray,
Like ancient John Rogers—a martyr, that day;
There was Bridget and Dinah, and Sallie and Moll,
And daddy and mammy and granny et al,—
Oh, a motley old crowd as éver were seen,
Were the greenhorns that gathered that day on the green.

And yet, as I stood 'neath the arching old trees,
Which for three generations have swung to the breeze,
I thought it was yeomanry like unto these
That furnish the fellows that take their degrees:
For what so of lore can be sandwiched between
The yacht, and the bat, and the "fence" on the green.
And I thought of their bliss, if they lacked but in knowledge,
Of what their bright cubs were about "down to college."
For their toil were embittered, did they know that each penny
Sent down to their "darlings" was just one too many;
Serving only to keep them away from the plow—
The only profession they were fitted to know—
And to tether them out on the world for subsistence,
To preach out, or pray out, a useless existence.

But, also, I thought how the beautiful trees
Could tell, if they would, how from yeomen like these
Came thousands of youth to the pierian stream,
To find in its waters the goal of their dream—

Of the thousands that came and the thousands that fled
 From their classical shades to the shades of the dead,
 Writing high, as they traveled from age unto age,
 Their names, through their deeds, on humanity's page.

Aye, laugh if you will, at the Fresh on the "fence,"
 And joke his brogans, which you say are immense;
 But you'll find them one day, and it may not be far,
 Walking into the judgment seat, over the "bar,"
 Or into the forum, on mission divine,
 To break down the idols of custom and time.

So, give us your hand, then, brave sons of the soil,
 Though rude be your raiment, and hardy your toil;
 Though the butterfly world may deride you, at length
 To your fields it must come for its vigor and strength.

WHAT I WOULD HAVE SAID.

IF I had been advised, my friends, of that delightful greeting,
 That sweet "surprise" that set my heart to such tumult-
 uous beating—

Not that I think, to such as thee, my humble thoughts essen-
 tial,

Yet, this is what I would have said, between us, confidential:

Fill up the bumper high, my boys! fill up to fullest measure:
 And while to love we consecrate this hour of social pleasure,
 Let's drop life's haunting thirst for gain, bar out the idle
 schemer,

And crossing palm to boyish dreams, let's drink unto the
 dreamer.

Time's annual rounds are fifty-nine, and as I now record them,
 Emotions crowd so thickly that I know not how to word them.
 Lo! on my castled prison walls awak'ning from my slumber
 Each birthday morn, with startled gaze, one window less I
 number!

Yet, as of yore, through what remain, the hills round up as
greenly

And all along the river's bank, the lillies bloom as queenly.

Old age, go to ! Within my heart love's tender songs are
trilling,

As sweetly as when, long ago, the old, old story telling.

I will not have it that I'm "old." True, time must stop his
timing,

Or soon, or late—soon it may be—yet up the mountain
climbing,

The train moves on. Breath is not life. Earth particles may
sever,

Yet lives the spirit that indwelt forever and forever.

Forever? 'Tis a simple word; an infant's lip may tell it;

Yet, save who ruleth, where is he in fullness to reveal it?

The train moves on. "How know I this?" E'en as upon
the ocean,

One feels the thrill, though deaf and blind, of paddle wheels
in motion.

Ah, but you say, "show but one track of whom hath crossed
the border,

And I will turn to holy things—will set my house in order;

And gold shall be as simple dust; and man shall be my
brother;

And I'll prefer to selfish ends the glory of another.

E'en more, I'll give of what is mine, to whom but asked to
borrow;

Nor have a care for scrip or purse, to serve me on the morrow.

Men tell me what they think is known about some far off glory,

But who comes back from heav'nly shores to tell a traveled
story?

I cannot answer as I would, lest ye should not believe me;

But this I say, unless the Word was written to deceive thee,

Around are "clouds of witnesses," and who are they, I
wonder,

But friends to come at call to rend this veil of doubt asunder.

"And shall this be?" Friend, keep thy heart; what hath been
is forever;

How know you but some spirit form hath crossed the shining
river;

Hath left its footprints in the sand—perchance to greet our
vision,

May stand in wait, with map in hand, to show us the elysian.

What wretched lives these mortals live who prate of heaven
and glory,

And clutch at gold and paltry dust, until the head is hoary;

Who plant and sow and reap and mow, or in or out of season—

Who breathe to live and live to breathe, and for no other
reason;

Save, tow'rd the end, with crooning song, to measure up their
losses,

Up-climb their little calvaries and murmur at their crosses.

I know not how it may have been with you, my friend and
brother;

But, as for me, no fault I find with earth, our loving mother;

All that I have, all that I am, to her kind hand I owe it;

All that shall be, shall be because through her did heaven
bestow it.

In worldly things a fair success I do not beg or borrow;

In hope and faith a millionaire, I boldly face the morrow.

A faithful wife hath blessed my board; children—but they
have left me;

I drop a tear and kiss the rod of fortune that bereft me.

So looking down the line of years with nothing to be vain of,

With here and there a shadow grim, yet little to complain of,

That calm philosophy of life hath brought its consolation,

That takes what is and makes the best of every situation.

I walk the hills of God to find his footsteps there before me;
I turn my upward gaze to know His greatness spanneth o'er
me;

I bend me to the blades of grass and listen to their voices,
While in the glories of the rose my inmost soul rejoices.

So on my chosen path I tread, yet am I never lonely,
For, though I seem to walk alone, 'tis but in seeming only.
A peopled world surroundeth me, a thousand times more real
Than aught imagination paints in far off realms ideal.

"My home an Eden? Yes, my friend, by Love long since
pre-empted,
Where Eve, to taste forbidden fruit, hath never more been
tempted.

And if or not to others good, yet hath my humble rhyming
A ladder proved on which to give my footsteps higher climbing.

Forgive, good friends. I would not vaunt; yet something
here impels me

To give, as best I can, the key to what of hope indwells me.
Your kindly words, like evening dew, that lifts the drooping
roses,

To one in doubt of strength or worth, to nobler toil disposes.
Long life to all; I give you speed! Whate'er hath been of
sorrow,

Thank God our friendships yet remain, out-living every
morrow.

Thank God, indeed, that we have lived, did blighting winds
blow strongly,

For times and seasons hath the world with us gone sad and
wrongly;

Run up the ledger lines of bliss, by daily pen recorded—
Wife, children, friends! though earth be all, is life not well
rewarded?

THE DYING SOLDIER.

NAY, do not deceive me, doctor:
My marching is nearly done:
I shall tent in the shadowy valley
Ere the dawn of to-morrow's sun.

You have ministered to the body,
But, within, was a troubled ill—
A sickness of heart and of conscience,
That baffled your greatest skill.

Who kills may not be an "assassin,"
And yet, as to manner of death,
It is death all the same to the loser,
Howe'er be the stoppage of breath.

As a soldier I fought in the war time,
A sharpshooter, my rifle was true;
If the killing of men was an honor,
Then honors were mine not a few.

I was never a weakling, doctor,
I've battled again and again,
Where the blood at my feet was flowing,
Like floods from the summer's rain,

With never a thought or quiver
That back of it had a fear,
Though oft, at some simple sorrow,
Have I dropped, it may be, a tear.

One morning, as after the battle,
I stood, and with bated breath,
Looked into the marble faces
Of men that were cold in death,

I thought of my day's sharpshooting,
And how I had seen them fall,
Ere the smoke from my rifle vanished,
To the "ping" of my minnie ball!

There was one that I well remembered—
'Gainst the duty I felt was mine,
Whose youthfulness pleaded me strongly,—
A lad on the picket line.

One may stand at the front of the battle,
And, putting up life against life,
May find by some chivalric pleading,
Excuse for his murderous strife;

But I, from my vantage of safety,
Had drawn on that boy in grey:
There was nothing for "chance;" I could hit him,
And did. It was right, they say.

But I could not quite help thinking,
That morning, that, somewhere, afar,
A mother, perhaps, was awaiting
Her darling's return from the war.

And that moment, forgetting the soldier,
I wept at my deed as a man
That of killing a brother was guilty,
And was resting as under a ban.

And to deny, though it came as a duty,
The heart of that youth in its prime,
To have pierced from my tree top of safety,
Cometh back to my soul as a crime.

Since that morning, and after the battle,
That face or by day or by night
Reproachful comes back to me saying,
"But a coward from ambush would fight.

I suppose it is foolishness, doctor,
But of those that my bullets have missed,
I would often have bartered my freedom
That boy to have found on the list.

THE MAKING OF THE WILL.

THEY had gathered from the mountains, they had gathered from the glen—

Stalwart sons and loving daughters, little maidens, little men,
Making all the echoes happy, all that bright November day,
Till the early coming twilight in the shadows crept away.

Thanksgiving day was ended: they were sitting by the fire,
She, the white-capped smiling matron—he, the stout gray-headed sire.

There was silence in the household, save the ticking of the clock,
And the clicking of the needles as they lengthened out the sock.

In the pantry, quite dismantled by the patriarchal hand,
Lo! the carcass of the turkey, like a wreck upon the strand;
Earthen platters by the dozen, minus now the pumpkin pie—
Empty pans and plates and china, piled upon the table high.

Like a tempest, left the urchin a troubled track behind:
Grandpa's knife reported broken, scissors grandma could'nt find.

Ah! but "children will be children," thought the good old-fashioned pair,
As they sat and builded castles—pretty castles in the air,

For the laddies and the lassies of their cherished little flock,
To the clicking of the needles and the ticking of the clock:—
Till the automatic fingers laid the knitting work away,
And the matron, thus outspoken, talked about a coming day:

We are getting old, my husband, and the time is near at hand,
When we start upon our journey to the undiscovered land;
It may be upon the morrow—at the best no distant day,
And there's something to be thought of ere we go upon our way.

We have got two hundred acres, and a half a dozen boys,
With two bright and loving daughters, as the crowning of our
joys:

Tom and Joe, sharp as any, yet will pay all they owe;
James and John and Mark and Matthew, all are honest as we
know.

I am sure I could not mention one of all the blessed throng
That I think would take advantage, or would do the girls a
wrong,

But we cannot tell what may be; pure and white as driven
snow,

Greed for gain might sink an angel to the nether depths below.

Yes, I understand you, mother. I've been thinking of it;
still,

Had I not, as yet, felt ready for the making of my will.
But a word has set me thinking; I was in the barn to-day;
Just outside the boys were talking, and I heard the eldest
say,

As the first born, to these acres I was once the only heir,
Hence the homestead, by my birthright, ought to fall unto
my share.

How the thing came up I know not, for the boys spake very
low,

But I heard the youngest answer, why begin the wrangle now?

And the elder one responded, well, you know they're getting
old:

Thus I saw how love is blunted at the very touch of gold;
And I thought upon the morrow that we'd call the lawyer
man,

And we'll fix it as we want it, or as nearly as we can.

For, you see, it is not easy, quite, to settle an estate;
In advance of circumstances and the happenings of fate,
So to deal out even justice in accordance with the needs
Of the candidates in waiting for our mortgages and deeds.

And the first of all, beloved, I will deed the half to you,
 And will say to the survivor that the whole of it shall go;
 Then we'll sign a paper jointly, so that when our tale is told,
 The boys shall have the acres and the girls shall have the
 gold.

Nay, twas thus upspake the matron; gold may take a sudden
 flight:

If we write them down as equals would it not be nearer right?
 Houses, lands, go on increasing in their value many fold,
 While forever stands the dollar as a dollar but in gold.

You shall have it as you wish it. I could never do the wrong,
 Of withholding from the weaker to bestow upon the strong.
 We have deemed each newest comer as the fairest and the
 best

Of the whole as with fledgling pinions it fluttered from the
 nest;

E'en to-day when gathered round us, did I look the flock
 about,

For the one—if one must leave us—and I could not pick it
 out.

So I think upon the morrow we will call the lawyer man,
 And we'll settle it as fairly and as squarely as we can.

* * * * * * *

There was silence in the household. She had finished off the
 sock;

He had asked continued blessing on the cherished little flock;
 And the clock kept watch above them, as they slumbered on
 until

Was ushered in the morning for the making of the will.

MY STORY OF THE YEARS.

I.

ON Woodbridge hills, till lately, stood an old house by the
way,
Unpainted, save by Father Time, and noted in its day,
As where the trav'ler stopped to rest, and where the rustics
all
Where went to bring, from far and near, their maidens to the
ball.

Here slept and waked my kinsmen, long; and just across the
way,
In ancient Woodbridge's burial ground they're "sleeping" yet
to-day;
So saith the headstone—orthodox—in waiting for "the sound
Of Gabriel's trump"—somehow, sometime, to wake them from
the ground.

In this great house, two stories high, a palace in its time,
One winter's day, first saw the light the subject of our
rhyme;
Twelve pounds of pulpy, pinky flesh, was all the stranger had,
With not a crust for hunger's need, or pillow for his head.
His language none could understand, though striving hard to
say,
As best he could, by sign and sound, that he had come to
stay:

E'en that, a little rusty from his lately traveled path,
He wanted to be shown his room and take his little bath.

Some said the doctor, some that God had borne him to the
spot;
Whiche'er it was, his baggage checks somebody had forgot!
Since not a rag the beggar had to cover him from shame,
Besides, to make the matter worse, nobody knew his name.

Who was the first to welcome him is not exactly clear,
At least to me—at sixty-one,—though, doubtless, I was there;
Some helpful hand there must have been, for, of all human
kind,

A tramp more destitute than he were hard, indeed, to find.

A have a dim remembrance of a pair of loving eyes,
As blue as if their color had been ravished from the skies,—
Of loving arms that did enfold with that great wond'rous
love,

Not born of earth, but from the fount of motherhood above.

I hear a soft, sweet song that comes, like some Æolian
strain,

To soothe and calm to slumber, or to charm away some pain,
But then, ah me! that song was heard in days so long ago,
That only now its echo comes to me, at sixty-one.

II.

Sometimes—a child again—I think of that small hand of
mine,

And wonder if my mother thought its future to divine.

And, though perchance, how sin could stain, not easy to
foresee,

Did not her heart go trembling as she thought of what might
be?

Perhaps. But never more, I ween, than doth, to-day, mine
own

At perils that it hath escaped; at wrongs it might have done,
But for some overruling good, that did its fortunes bless,
And give for it, where others failed, fair measure of success.

And then that tablet of the soul—the brain, unwrit upon,
How crowded with historic lines, to-day at sixty-one!

The hopes and fears that come to all; the struggle for a
name;

The greeting, and the parting kiss; the word of praise, or
blame;—

And twice ten thousand minor things, along life's daily road,
Picked up, somehow, for good or ill, and in some corner
stowed.

What if the day shall come when all, before the good and
true,

For righteous judgment and award, shall pass in clear review?

As glancing at the record now, methinks I may be glad
To find it ranked, if not as "good," at least not wholly bad,
(Though, some will say that whatsoe'er was done, or left un-
done,—

Such as I am, by heav'n's decree, am I at sixty-one).

And so began that living line that ends—who knoweth where?
Three score and one are mine to-night; pray shall I have the
ten?

And if I die, what will be gained? The nine will soon go by
On rapid wings. And will they leave me ready, then, to die?

At twenty-one, so softly doth the seaward breezes blow,
That scarce of wreck the sailor deems it possible to know;
At sixty-one, on weary wings, storm-beaten, worn and gray,
Against the wind, against the tide, his ship comes up the bay.

And though seaworthy, nevermore of past exploits to dream,
Succumbing slowly to the worm, he anchors in the stream;
Now heading up, or heading down with ebb or flow of tide,
Only too glad to keep afloat, and from the great untried.

III.

In looking o'er some papers in the old time duly filed
By clerkly hands, I came across the record of a child
That had—so did the story go—through mercy that was
great,

Been made, someway, a child of God—that is, "regenerate."

That simple name, to others naught, how did it thrill to know
That it was writ for me, for me! some sixty years ago!

To think as one, that child and I! how strangely did it seem
To find that golden hair, now gray and dropping in the
stream!

And what a stream it was, and is! What windings in and out!

The yearning search for living truth; the cavilings of doubt;
The frantic clutch at saving "planks" that none can comprehend;

The sometimes sinking to despair,—the grave the bitter end!

"Regenerate!" With but one year for sinning on the earth,
Was life then such a failure as to need a "second birth?"

I did not understand it then: as little do I now,

Yet, from that day, hath stood, unseen, the cross upon my brow;

To what effect heav'n only knows. Perhaps was only meant
That so, by its good influence, my footsteps should be bent
Toward the right. If so, perchance, however small the gain,
That holy sign upon my brow may not have been in vain.

IV.

My mother! In that early day when hope such promise made,
How proudly on the altar was thy little firstling laid!

For it of future usefulness beneath those morning skies,
What visions, as of glory, filled thy young and tender eyes!

How fervent was thy promise to the priestly office given,
Those tiny feet to train and lead along the road to heaven!
I know not what the end may be, but if it should be mine
To fail the goal, the fault, I know, will not be counted thine.

My Mother, through thine own three score of sweetly patient
years,

The same great trusting, patient soul, in gladness, or in tears.
To-night among these chosen friends, and 'mid these scenes
of joy,—

My Mother, from thine own bright home, bend down and
bless thy boy.

Because the silver in his locks hath crowded out the gold,
And slower, weaker in his step, they say he groweth old;

But only 'tis his castle that is falling to decay,
With mosses gathered from the years—his roof that groweth
gray.

As on the altar it was thine, of old, to lay him down,
In infancy with pleading prayer, so now at sixty-one,
Still but a child, through all the path remaining to be trod,
My Mother, reach thy helping hand, and lead him up to God.

THE LITTLE GRUMBLERS.

“WHAT for should I be thankful, sis?”
Said little Tommy Brown;

“There ain’t a wusser knife nor that
In all this ugly town.

I’ll bet it did not cost a dime.”

“Be careful, Tom,” they said;

“But just see there, my goodness, sis,
’Twon’t cut no more nor lead.

“Now there’s the knife of Billy Snow,
Down yonder at the dyke;
Pearl-handled and six-bladed, too—
Now that is something like.

And such an edge! my goodness, sis,
He took a single hair
And clipped it, right afore my eyes,
The day that I was there.”

“And see,” said little Wilhelmine,
“’At ’ittle nassy doll!

Hands, dey are sticks; hair t’at is wool;
Eyes, dey don’t wink at all!

And such a d’ess! my doodness, ’Tom!
All tied up wid a string!

I wonder what they sink I want
Of such a nassy sing?

“I bet I’d div a better sing,
Or nossin’ div at all;
You frow away your mean ole knife,
And I frow ’way my doll.”
And so the little ones ran on
About their fortune bad,
Repining o’er what they had not,
Despising what they had.

Around the corner of the street,
And down an alley way,
Upon a sloping cellar door,
Some children were at play;
And up and down the steep incline,
Such merry fun they had,
When up spoke little Marguerite,
“I think it be too bad,

“That there be children on the street,
That are so very poor
That they, to have such fun as we,
Haint got no cellar door.”
God bless the little Marguerite!
Barefooted—thinly clad;—
That found beneath such humble guise
Good reason to be glad.

Gold is not wealth: a simple gown
May clothe the village queen
As richly as the city belle,
With all her fairy sheen.
Full oft the poorest poverty
In silk and satin bound;
While underneath contented rags
The truest wealth is found.

So, children,—we of larger growth,—
As down life’s steep incline

We journey on, its proffered cup,—
Or water filled, or wine,—
We'll take with ever grateful hand,
While pitying yet the "poor"
Who live adown some alley way
And have no "cellar door."

TWO WAYS OF LIVING.

I.

OLD Griper Gripp, that once I knew,
Was what the world calls well to do:
That is, the daily "street" upon
His name was counted number one.
At village bank, with balance good,
Among the best his credit stood:
E'en favored by his fellow men,
He wrote his name with H-o-n.

Though straining at the gnat of right,
The camel wrong, and easy quite,
He swallowed, keeping well in sight
The statute law. Though, in his deal,
He often closely trod the heel
Of whom that, as to "mine and thine,"
Forgets to draw the moral line.

At church he hired a family pew,
And promptly paid the rentals due;
Though Deacon Good, who passed the hat
On mission days could tell us that,
Whate'er the cause, he never, quite,
Could hit old Griper's pocket right;
Though wishing well poor dying men,
He'd nothing smaller than a ten;
Or else, to his "regret," perchance,
His change was in his "tother pants."

Each Sunday morn, with pious care,
He opened up the book of prayer,
And, kneeling down, imploring said,
"Lord give to us our daily bread,"
Although, when asked, himself to give
That starving men might eat and live,
He struck the pleading angel dumb,
With "charity begins at home."

The promise made (he read it "gold")
Of "bread" returning many fold,
As written in the Holy Book,
To him had such a thrifty look
That oft he made the venture, yet,
Lest heav'n the bargain should forget,
Whene'er the seaward "bread" he cast,
To "business" line he made it fast,
So that, if came no luck alack!
With prudent hand to draw it back—

Some cheat on nature to devise—
Still closer to economise!
This was the one great aim in life,
That ruled old Griper's stingy wife.
From dairy shelf and rifled nest,
To market went her daily best;
While on her own scant table spread
Was creamless milk, unbuttered bread.

Among her cold unpictured halls,
Half furnished rooms and naked walls,
Shut out from every hope that cheers,
Grown sordid, soulless with the years,
Trudged weary on this drudging slave,
Her narrowed pathway to the grave.
In short, their acres to extend;
The much to get, the little spend;
With slumber scant at plough and wheel,

To fill the time twixt meal and meal;
Such was the weary rounding strife
That bound old Griper and his wife,
Who, as the yearly cycles rolled,
Clutched tighter still their precious gold,
Until their shriveled souls, aghast
At funeral bills, stole out at last,
Leaving their bodies, side by side,
To wonder why they lived and died.

II.

Upon the hill, not far away,
Lived at the time one Simon Gray,
Not over rich, yet was he known
To hold of honest "gear" his own,
Enough all current bills to pay,
With something for a rainy day;
Though fearing not sheol or hell,
He gladly heard the Sabbath bell,
And, to its oft inviting tongue,
Joined in the praises said or sung,
Heard of a God to be appeased,
Took what he could, thought what he pleased.

Though wasteful not, with liberal hand
He fully met each fair demand.
"Keep to the right,—give half the road,"—
This was the farmer's moral code;
And strictly to its mark he trod,
In market place and house of God.

Within his household gates enthroned,
Sat peace and comfort, plenty crowned,
Where music came, with art, to please
And brighten all his hours of ease.

When to his friendly open door
Came seeking aid the worthy poor,

Two loaves in hand, he kept but one,
While had his pleading brother none;
For in his plain, blunt way, he said,
'Twas not his own—God made the bread.

Belovèd of all, his gentle dame
Made welcome all that to them came;
By ceaseless care for others good
She gathered wealth least understood
By whom, forgetting “thee” and “thine,”
Give only heed to “me” and “mine.”
And this is why that, while the twain
Had aught of meat or aught of grain,
Not one sweet mercy made demand,
That did not find a helping hand.

When, at the last, with duty done,
Came to them both life's setting sun,
Like children twain, and hand in hand,
They journeyed to the promised land,
Crowned by the wreaths that glory weaves,
And laden with well ripened sheaves.

As side by side their bones recline.
By way of moral, brother mine,
I ask you which was richest, pray,
Or Farmer Grip or Farmer Gray?

III.

There's something grand in living
So, my friend,
That shall come no sad misgiving
At the end:
In our dealings with each other,
Conscience nevermore to smother,
Loving God, and one another,
To the end.

THANKSGIVING IN YE OLDEN TYME.

I.

IN the last days of November, when the air was getting cool,
And the apples had been gathered, and the granaries were
full,
Came the wished-for proclamation, from the pulpits of the
land,
For a season of Thanksgiving, by the governor's command.
Quick, the kitchens all were busy, and the apple and the
quince
On the tables were uprounding, while the sausage and the
mince
Were chopped, and mixed and flavored, and the pumpkin pies
were browned,
And the proud old turkey, lifeless, was stretched upon the
ground,

For the children that were coming—homeward coming from
their farms;
John and Jennie, Mark and Mary with their little ones in
arms,
And their great big-hearted laddies, and their plump and
hearty girls—
Sun-browned and weather-toughened, with a multitude of
curls.

II.

Hark! along the country highways hear the clatter of the
heels!
Get up, Dobbin! hey, there, Robbin! Faster, faster go the
wheels!
Distances are counted nothing; twenty miles, not far away,
To the children home returning for the great Thanksgiving
day.

What a welcome there awaiting ! Grandma, everywhere, is
seen,
With her doughnuts and her cookies, and her pinafore so clean !
Grandpa, catching up the babies, and dancing o'er the floor,
As if, with the happy moment, age had vanished from the
door.

And then the hour of feasting ! Was there ever such a spread ?
Eager, how they gather 'round it, with the grandsire at the
head ;

Wait they but a prayerful moment, rev'rent bending every one ;
Then, huzza ! the signal soundeth, and the battle is begun.

Ho ! the great brown smoking turkey, and the chickens every
one,

By the vote of all the party, seasoned well and fully done ;
And the pumpkin pies and puddings, though melting fast
away,

Yet ample in their storage for the great Thanksgiving day !

III.

The supper o'er, the pantries are inspected, and the cheese :—
The apple sauce and butter, and the honey of the bees :
While the children raid the attic, hunting out the little shoes
Once, perchance, that were the fathers'—all stubbed out at
the toes,

Or, with mouldiness half covered ; the hat without a brim,
That the youngest one declareth a perfect fit for him.

In the sunshine on the south side of the cottage are the sons,
Recounting of their labors or the trophies of their guns !
While, within, the matron listens to the hist'ries of the year ;—
With joy to give rejoicing—with sorrow drop the tear.
Nightfall brings at last the parting, and the blessing of the
sire,

The homeward ride returning, and the chat around the fire
About the day eventful : its triumphs and its cheer—
By its pleasure fully measured, the longest of the year.

IV.

I am but a little maiden, and the story I unfold
Is a story that was told me of the simple days of old,
When to make a maiden happy, such as I, in many ways
Wasn't nearly so expensive as in these our latter days.

Though the little frock, or jacket, queerly fashioned, that they
wore,

Were carded, spun and woven, all within the cottage door,
They were sported just as proudly and as grandly as to-day
We children sport our dresses, more costly and so gay!

Yet, although a little maiden, I am old enough to know
Into humble, holy living, that my duty is to grow,
And to learn, as on I travel tow'rd the beautiful and true,
If the blessings are not many, to be happy with the few.

So on this our own Thanksgiving, as we gather at the feast,
Let us, one and all, remember to be thankful for the least
Of all the many blessings that may come unto our door;
Giving freely, as receiving, to the friendless and the poor.

LO! THE POOR INDIAN.

THERE'S a land in the west where the mountains are grand,
The hill tops are green and the breezes are bland;
Where the red man remains, like a sentinel lone,
To watch o'er the empires forgotten and gone.

Untutored, uncultured, the plaything of fate—
Unskilled in the ways of a civilized state—
He asks not for empire so he but remains
To hunt the wild buffalo over the plains.

He plants his rude lodge on the banks of the stream,
Where to sit at the close of the day and to dream,
While his fathers come back in their shadowy lines,
To picture the plains with their mystical signs!

They mount the war mound, with its terraces high,
And again through the air do their swift arrows fly:
The stone from the sling and the arrows sharp thrust
Leave the foe, as of old, with his face in the dust.

The vision is past and he wakes from his dream,
To find on the banks of his beautiful stream,
That the mounds where the bones of his fathers were urned,
Th' invader hath levelled—the plowshare hath turned.

He sees the proud cap of the white surging wave,
As it sweeps to the westward the ranks of the brave,
From the homes of their childhood forever away,
And the hunter of old is the hunted to-day.

O'er mountain and hilltop—through meadow and plain,
He flees from the demon of plunder and gain;
Though famine confront him, he dare not go back,
For the red hand of slaughter is close on the track.

No right that's held sacred, no "treaty" so strong,—
Though the "Great Father" sign,—as to guard him from
wrong;

His household polluted, himself but a slave;
No spot on the earth for so much as a grave.

Then, standing erect in the strength of his pride,
Do you wonder he clutches the gun at his side?
As he turneth, at length, on the foe in his path,
Do you wonder his knife is the tongue of his wrath?

Pale face, or red, 'tis a pitiful knave,
That stands not his home and his fireside to save;
'That cringes and creeps at a tyrant's behest—
E'en the viper will strike who invaded his nest!

"Treacherous?" Yes, but the white man is that.
"Indolent?" Doubtless, and "savage," and yet
To hound or to starve, or to shoot him, at sight,
May "solve a great problem" but can never be right.

Once to *his* shores came a shivering crew,
Houseless and homeless, their numbers but few;
Were they sent, can we say, to some barren "reserve,"
To be hedged in with arrows to shiver and starve?

Nay, but the hand of the God-fearing Penn,
They took as a man that was dealing with men;
And scarce till debauched and depraved by the white,
Did the red ever swerve from the line of the right!

Let us be just. In the name of our God,
If justice still lives where a pilgrim hath trod,
Let us call off our war dogs—our ring thieves, and then
Let us see if poor "Lo" will not live like a man.

Ne'er be it said while a million of graves
Are green in the land for the men that were slaves,
That th' shackle was torn from the ebony wrist,
But to clasp the red hand of this child of the west!

DECEMBER.

THE tempest gathers overhead, the clouds hang dark and
low;
Already, through the chill grey air comes sifting down the
snow.

The flocks, instinctive, seek the fold; with hurrying homeward
pace,

The shivering kine safe shelter seek to chew the cud of peace.

Wild grows the storm, and careless blind and gate swing to
and fro;

God help who hath no roof to-night to shelter from the snow!
There was a time—alas! gone by—a time of birds and
flowers—

Of green clad hills and sunny skies—of soft and shady
bowers.

And back as retrospection flits, again beside the brook
Where once I trolled, I troll again the barbed and baited hook.

Above, the sky is soft and blue; below, the earth is green,
And sweet the sea of perfumed air that seems to flow between.

Once more I see the dew-drops strung like pearls along the
 spray;

Again is heard from topmast bough blithe robin's roundelay.

The limpid waters dance and sing along the pebbly shore,
Or loiter 'neath the green clad boughs that shade the cottage
 door.

The dream is past; the skies are cold; the grass is crisp and
 sere;

With rustling leaves December strews the death-bed of the
 year.

Yet high—heap high the glowing grate, and make the circle
 wide,

Forgetting not that winter's gloom hath yet a sunny side,—

That, cheerless though December's snow, and sharp his icy
 dart,

The worst of all that can befall is the winter of that heart

Which underneath the russet leaf hath buried every joy,
That hath, alas! no love or hope, without some crude alloy.

Let tempests howl! we'll heap the grate! up, up the Christmas
 tree!

Kriss Kringle, bring your jolly pack and spread its treasures
 free,

That Joe and Jake, and Bet and Bess, with all the precious
 crew,

With glad surprise may feast their eyes, and fill their pockets,
 too!

And if, perchance, less favored ones should stand without the
door,

Remember that the Christmas King Himself was of the poor.

And as our evening light goes out with glad and cheering ray,
So may we help some darkened soul to find the better way.

For at the best they are so short—our seasons here below—
That summer's wheat must get a start beneath the winter's
snow;

And well for him who in the spring, finds that his growing
sheaves

Of love and hope gained hardy root beneath December leaves.

DISCOURAGEMENTS.

THE sun comes up and the sun goes down,
And the great world wakes or slumbers;
Love strikes its harp to a tender tone,
Or to wild and thrilling numbers.

Ambition sitteth her steed, alack!
Through the smiling valley whirling,
While over the skyward chimney stack
The prosperous smoke is curling.

I hear the clack of the press of time,
With voice, as it were, of thunder!
If aught can hinder its work sublime,
I stand by its side, and wonder.

Alas, for us! Just when we think
That our ends are so well shapen,
That, of some glory, we're on the brink,
There's something sure to happen!

The sun comes up and the sun goes down,
In a doubtful sort of vapor;
And the great world stands aghast, that Brown
Should have gone and stopped his paper!

LINES.

READ AT THE SILVER WEDDING OF W. W. LEE AND WIFE, MERIDEN,
JULY 24th, 1876.

FOOL, said my muse to me once on a time,
Look in thy heart and find me a rhyme,—
For whom I would honor, come get me a rhyme.
But wherefore a rhyme, said I, O thou my muse?
If aught must be said, why not say it in prose?
In the easier way let me say it in prose.

And thus said my muse:

Though the rhyme have no sense, yet often it will
Sugar-coat to your taste a very bad pill.
In the years long ago—something less than a hundred—
Near the City of Elms, by the wayside there wandered
A hopeful young pilgrim, just started in life,
Who, like Cœlebs, was roaming in search of a wife.
From the hills of Barkhamsted, whose beacon hath shed
Such lustre historic, his footsteps had led
Through the highways and byways of city and mart,
In search for—well, something concerning the heart;
Though there's room for doubt, with regard to the latter,
If the youngster, himself, knew just what was the matter.
Yet, that something was wrong with that "muscle" he knew
By the way that the plaguey thing fluttered and flew,
Every time, at the church, that he sat himself down
By the side of a curl or a calico gown.
An ill-defined longing, that ended in tears:—
A feeling that he was but half of the shears:—
One leg of the compass, that, turn as it would,
Struck never a circle—as never it could:—
A yearning, at times, for a rope, or the river
With half uttered thoughts of a "farewell forever"
To the cruel old world that was such a deceiver!
In short, from his symptoms, 'twas plain to be seen,
That though he had lived through the usual routine,

Of teething, baptism, the measles, and mumps,
He was likely to yield to the "true lover's" dumps.
Nay, deride not his weakness, my batchelor friend!
You've been there yourself—or you'll go in the end;
For when the bold Cupid, his strong bow shall bend,
You cannot, forever, your heart-skin defend.
Though this for your comfort as every one knows,
The older the bark the tougher it grows.

But, this by the way. Through the day and the night,
And the night and the day—by the aid of that "light"
From the Barkhamsted hills, our hero pressed on,
With his back to the town and its butterfly throng,
Sipping beauty and honey from this flower and that,
By way of a balm for his sorrows; and yet,
Like one who athirst in the desert doth hear
The ripple of waters that ever are near,
Yet ever are far—so he struggled amain,
Tow'rd the mirage that promised, but to fail him again,
But, to shorten the story, suffice it to say,
That he lived it all through and is living to-day,
Thrice blest by the "heart's ease" he found at the door
Of a little low cottage close down by the shore.
Thrice blest, did I say? Ah, well do I know,
Brother Wallace, the worth of these flowrets that grew,—

So sweetly, and gently, and loving, and true,
Side by side in that cottage, for me and for you.
You have fought a good fight! I have done what I could,
And the world, as I trust, has gained something in good.
You have drank the sweet drops from our mythical spring;
You have wore the proud vestments of Judea's king;
You have heard the loud plaudit that greeted your name,
When the stone, once rejected, the corner became:
And yet, oh my brother, and yet who shall say,
When our labor is done at the close of the day,
And we debit our losses, and credit our gains,
And God strikes the balance for all that remains

That is worthy of record, who shall say what is due
To the influence sweet of those flow'rets that grew,
Side by side in that cottage, for me and for you?

As through the rough valleys our footsteps have led,
These tent-mates of ours have been help-mates, indeed!
Or in weal, or in woe, with the flow of the years,
They have joyed with our joy, and have shared in our tears.
And if, while on guard, and our mentors they stood,
They have blamed when they must, they have praised when
they could.

And though—as stern fortune decreed it—they got
Little gold with their venture, accepting their lot,
They have wasted no tears over what it was not:
But heart beat to heart beat, their lives have been spent
In the kingdom of love and the lap of content.

Oh blessed contentment! thrice precious above
All price are thy “herbs” in the cottage of love!
Where wanting but little, that little is given,
And souls, all untrammelled, strike straight out for heaven.
Aye! whose heads, like a land rising up through the night,
Catch, already, the beams of the first morning light,
Which stream from the open gates, pearly and white!
Wealth may build up her palaces, wondrous and fair;
May fill them with fashion and ornament rare;
But the worm at the core is sure to be there.
Then, where peace rules the night and love rules the day,
Where hope talks of heaven, and faith points the way:—
Where soulless ambition nor envy are sent,
Let me live, let me die in the lap of content.

There's a wealth that is better than gold!
There's a joy that can never forsake us!
There are deeds that will purchase a kingdom, beyond
Where the waters of death overtake us.

There are heights upon heights to be won!
White fields that with harvest are gleaming,—
The heights of true manhood—the harvest of love—
And there's never a moment for dreaming.

You may call it the "cant of a saint,"
You may deem it the rant of a rhymers!
But to live for another, unmindful of self,
I know that there's nothing sublimer.

Then give me, my brother, your hand,
Brown, yet bright with the glory of labor,
I invoke on it blessings! and long may you stand—
As of old—to do battle for truth in the land,
For your God, for your home and your neighbor.

THE VOLUNTEER BELL.

Hark to the bell,
The silver-tongued bell,
The iron and steel works bell;
With the gleaming of the light,
In the middle of the night,
How it startles us affright
With its knell!

Dong, ding, dong,
Is the little bell's song,
Till it wakes up the steel works gong—
And the belfry on the green;
And the leather hats are seen
With their hurrying machine,
Speeding along,

To the fire, fire, fire!
 The serpent-tongued fire!
 The leaping and demoniacal fire!
 That is robbed of its prey
 By the little bell's play,
 As it summons us away
 To the fire!

So here's to the bell,
 The volunteer bell,
 The iron and steel works bell;
 When its usefulness shall end—
 This, our gallant little friend,
 May it nevermore descend
 To the fire.

TO MY MOTHER IN HEAVEN.

O WOULD that I were with thee now,
 My mother dear,
 In heaven before God's throne to bow
 In reverent fear.
 While thou wert here life seemed a stream
 But all too calm;
 How could I ever with thee dream
 Of aught of harm.

Each ripple that around me broke
 Was fraught with joy;
 Each morn to bliss I but awoke
 Without alloy.
 And can I deem that thou'art gone
 To Heaven above?
 That I must tread life's path alone
 Without thy love?

That thou on me no more shalt smile,
 With gentle mien ?
 Thy tender voice no more beguile
 The weary e'en ?
 No, no! I'll ne'er believe it so,
 For thou art near;
 Thy angel voice shall soothe my woe,
 And dry the tear;

Thy spirit hover round my bed,
 My visions fill;
 Thy blessings fall upon my head,
 Peaceful and still;
 And when the night of death shall come,
 In heaven I'll join
 Thy spirit nevermore to roam,
 From bliss divine.

ON SAMBRO LEDGE.

FOUR miles south-west of Chebucto head
 Lifts Sambro ledge from its ocean'bed,
 Where a gallant ship that had gone astray
 Went down to wreck in the ocean spray.

Along the streets of the Netherland
 Was the legend seen upon every hand,
 "Our ships are safest to cross the brine;
 Ho! traveller, take the White Cross line!"

A hundred or more of peasants heard,
 And, taking the promisers at their word,
 O'er the great North Sea did their pathway lead
 Tow'rd the sunken rocks at Chebucto head.

From Antwerp out, twas the fourteenth day:
 Nor moon nor star shed a cheering ray
 On the midnight track. E'en Sambro's light
 Was drowned in the mist of that April night.

Snug in their berths, the pilgrim band
 Were dreaming of home and fatherland,
 Or of realms at hand, by their faith as seen,
 Where labor was king and love was queen.

* * * * *

Turning his back on the blinding storm,
 And hieing below himself to warm,
 The captain, yielding the wheel's command,
 Gave up the ship into Harding's hand.

And I read the tale of that farther night,
 That heeding not, or if wrong or right,
 The captain slept while his ship, alack!
 Went miles inland from the proper track.

And I farther read, that, of young and old,
 From the hungry waters dark and cold,
 Of lives as precious as yours or mine,
 Of the hundred, alas! were saved but nine!

There's a drunken wretch—a frensied blow,
 And a brother is lying stark and low,
 A pilot sleeps while the tempests rave
 And a hundred have gone to a watery grave.

The one is a murderer, so you say,
 And life for a life doth he repay.
 With a hundred lives to be answered for,
 Is the other, I pray you, less or more?

TRUE GREATNESS.

COUNT no man great because at the nod
Of his jeweled and kingly crown,
In meek submission, to kiss the sod
Which he treadeth his slaves kneel down.

Nor yet, because at his tyrant will
The nations have reeked in blood,
For know, true greatness can only dwell
In the breast of the truly good.

Count no man great because he can boast
Of millions of gold in store,
For though, through the might of his shining dust,
He may trample the toiling poor.

Yet, greater by far and richer he,
In the wealth of the heaven above,
Is the man whose soul from guile is free,
And whose heart is full of love.

LOVE CANNOT DIE.

ONE pleasant morning the wedding chimes
Rang out from the tower of the gray St. James,
And the village maidens came betimes,
With hopeful lovers and bashful swains,
Till the pews o'erflowed and the arches rang,
To the greeting song which the maidens sang.

So, when at length from the church did move
The happy couple as one, "no doubt,
In the world, "I said," that the fisher, Love,
Knew perfectly well what he was about,
When into the pool of that shadowy grove,
He cast his line for the mythic trout."

And then, methought if it should be mine
 Again to fish in the stream of love,
The place of all others to drop a line,
 Would be in the stream of that sylvan grove,
Afar from the world in its loving arms
 To bask in the light of a thousand charms.

To-night I sit by the sea alone,
 With outward look to the farther shore,
And a voice, as if from the dim unknown,
 Comes back to me through the sunset door,
And, as I look at the fading sky,
 The stars come out with a timid glow,
And a tear of sorrow bedims the eye,
 For the loves that went with the long ago.

For so it is, if we climb the steep
 To-day to fish in the silver stream,
To-morrow we go to our silent sleep,
 And love hath ended its charming dream;
Unless—but why should I raise the doubt?
 It must be true, or the whispers lie,
That never a lover hath loved for naught;—
 Never a love is born to die.

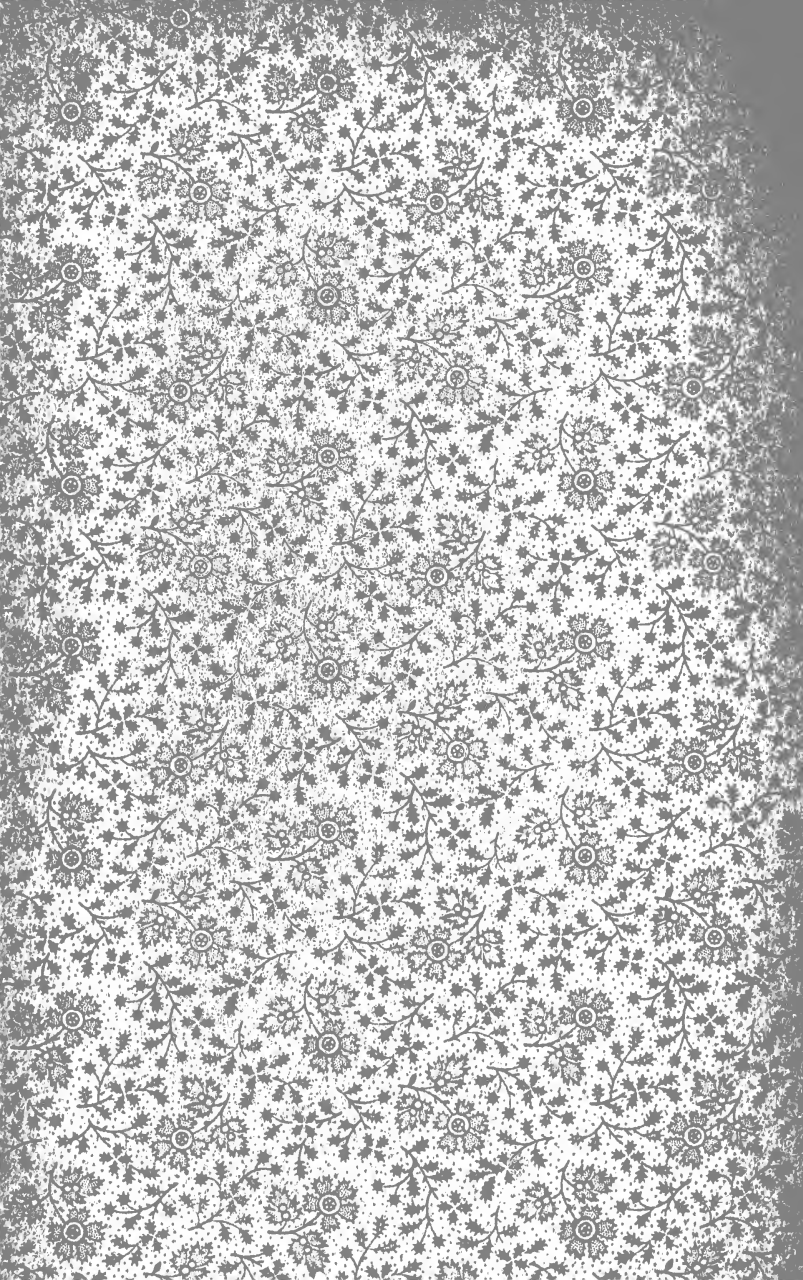
But why, my reader, this minor strain
 O'er the empty sheaves of the early years?
Better, far better, the later grain
 To winnow well for the ripened ears:
Better to take, like the frugal bee,
 From hedge, or meadow, or thistle-top,
Ever, whatever of sweet may be,
 Thankful e'en for a honey drop.





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